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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOL. XX

WEIR OF HERMISTON
THE PLAYS & FABLES

KIRSTIE, WITH A RUSHLIGHT IN HER HAND, STOLE INTO THE HALL

From a drawing by B. West Clinedinst

Novels and tales

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LETTERS AND MISCELLANIES OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

WEIR OF HERMISTON
THE PLAYS & FABLES

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TO
MY WIFE

I saw rain falling and the rainbow drawn
On Lammermuir. Hearkening I heard again
In my precipitous city beaten bells
Winnow the keen sea wind. And here afar,
Intent on my own race and place, I wrote.
Take thou the writing : thine it is. For who
Burnished the sword, blew on the drowsy coal,
Held still the target higher, chary of praise
And prodigal of counsel — who but thou?
So now, in the end, if this the least be good,
If any deed be done, if any fire
Burn in the imperfect page, the praise be thine.

INTRODUCTORY

In the wild end of a moorland parish, far out of the sight of any house, there stands a cairn among the heather, and a little by east of it, in the going down of the braeside, a monument with some verses half defaced. It was here that Claverhouse shot with his own hand the Praying Weaver of Balweary, and the chisel of Old Mortality has clinked on that lonely gravestone. Public and domestic history have thus marked with a bloody finger this hollow among the hills; and since the Cameronian gave his life there, two hundred years ago, in a glorious folly, and without comprehension or regret, the silence of the moss has been broken once again by the report of firearms and the cry of the dying.

The Deil's Hags was the old name. But the place is now called Francie's Cairn. For a while it was told that Francie walked. Aggie Hogg met him in the gloaming by the cairnside, and he spoke to her, with chattering teeth, so that his words were lost. He pursued Rob Todd (if anyone could have believed Robbie) for the space of half a mile with pitiful entreaties. But the age is one of incredulity; these superstitious decorations speedily fell off; and the facts of the story itself, like the bones of a giant buried there and half dug up, survived, naked and imperfect, in the memory of the scattered neighbours. To this day, of winter nights, when the sleet is on the window and the cattle are quiet in the byre, there will be told again, amid the silence of the young and the additions and corrections of the old, the tale of the Justice-Clerk and of his son, young Hermiston, that vanished from men's knowledge; of the two Kirsties and the Four Black Brothers of the Cauldstaneslap; and of Frank Innes, "the young fool advocate," that came into these moorland parts to find his destiny.

WEIR OF HERMISTON

WEIR OF HERMISTON

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND DEATH OF MRS. WEIR

THE Lord Justice-Clerk was a stranger in that part of the country; but his lady wife was known there from a child, as her race had been before her. The old "riding Rutherfords of Hermiston," of whom she was the last descendant, had been famous men of yore, ill neighbours, ill subjects, and ill husbands to their wives though not their properties. Tales of them were rife for twenty miles about; and their name was even printed in the page of our Scots histories, not always to their credit. One bit the dust at Flodden; one was hanged at his peel door by James the Fifth; another fell dead in a carouse with Tom Dalzell; while a fourth (and that was Jean's own father) died presiding at a Hell-Fire Club, of which he was the founder. There were many heads shaken in Crossmichael at that judgment; the more so as the man had a villainous reputation among high and low, and both with the godly and the worldly. At that very hour of his demise, he had ten going pleas before the session, eight of them op-

pressive. And the same doom extended even to his agents; his grieve, that had been his right hand in many a left-hand business, being cast from his horse one night and drowned in a peat-hag on the Kye skairs; and his very doer (although lawyers have long spoons) surviving him not long, and dying on a sudden in a bloody flux.

In all these generations, while a male Rutherford was in the saddle with his lads, or brawling in a change-house, there would be always a white-faced wife immured at home in the old peel or the later mansion-house. It seemed this succession of martyrs bided long, but took their vengeance in the end, and that was in the person of the last descendant, Jean. She bore the name of the Rutherfords, but she was the daughter of their trembling wives. At the first she was not wholly without charm. Neighbours recalled in her, as a child, a strain of elfin wilfulness, gentle little mutinies, sad little gaieties, even a morning gleam of beauty that was not to be fulfilled. She withered in the growing, and (whether it was the sins of her sires or the sorrows of her mothers) came to her maturity depressed, and, as it were, defaced; no blood of life in her, no grasp or gaiety; pious, anxious, tender, tearful, and incompetent.

It was a wonder to many that she had married — seeming so wholly of the stuff that makes old maids. But chance cast her in the path of Adam Weir, then the new Lord-Advocate, a recognised, risen man, the conqueror of many obstacles, and thus late in the day beginning to think upon a wife. He was one who looked rather to obedience than beauty, yet it would seem he was struck with her at the first look. "Wha's she?"

he said, turning to his host; and, when he had been told, "Ay," says he, "she looks menseful. She minds me——"; and then, after a pause (which some have been daring enough to set down to sentimental recollections), "Is she releegious?" he asked, and was shortly after, at his own request, presented. The acquaintance, which it seems profane to call a courtship, was pursued with Mr. Weir's accustomed industry, and was long a legend, or rather a source of legends, in the Parliament House. He was described coming, rosy with much port, into the drawing-room, walking direct up to the lady, and assailing her with pleasantries, to which the embarrassed fair one responded, in what seemed a kind of agony, "Eh, Mr. Weir!" or "O, Mr. Weir!" or "Keep me, Mr. Weir!" On the very eve of their engagement it was related that one had drawn near to the tender couple, and had overheard the lady cry out, with the tones of one who talked for the sake of talking, "Keep me, Mr. Weir, and what became of him?" and the profound accents of the suitor's reply, "Haangit, mem, haangit." The motives upon either side were much debated. Mr. Weir must have supposed his bride to be somehow suitable; perhaps he belonged to that class of men who think a weak head the ornament of women—an opinion invariably punished in this life. Her descent and her estate were beyond question. Her wayfaring ancestors and her litigious father had done well by Jean. There was ready money and there were broad acres, ready to fall wholly to the husband, to lend dignity to his descendants, and to himself a title, when he should be called upon the Bench. On the side of Jean there was perhaps some

fascination of curiosity as to this unknown male animal that approached her with the roughness of a ploughman and the *aplomb* of an advocate. Being so trenchantly opposed to all she knew, loved or understood, he may well have seemed to her the extreme, if scarcely the ideal, of his sex. And besides, he was an ill man to refuse. A little over forty at the period of his marriage, he looked already older, and to the force of manhood added the senatorial dignity of years; it was, perhaps, with an unreverend awe, but he was awful. The Bench, the Bar, and the most experienced and reluctant witness, bowed to his authority — and why not Jeannie Rutherford?

The heresy about foolish women is always punished, I have said, and Lord Hermiston began to pay the penalty at once. His house in George Square was wretchedly ill-guided; nothing answerable to the expense of maintenance but the cellar, which was his own private care. When things went wrong at dinner, as they continually did, my lord would look up the table at his wife: "I think these broth would be better to swim in than to sup." Or else to the butler: "Here, M'Killop, awa' wi' this Raadical gigot — tak' it to the French, man, and bring me some puddocks! It seems rather a sore kind of a business that I should be all day in Court haanging Raadicals, and get nawthing to my denner." Of course this was but a manner of speaking, and he had never hanged a man for being a Radical in his life; the law, of which he was the faithful minister, directing otherwise. And of course these growls were in the nature of pleasantry, but it was of a recondite sort; and uttered as they were in his resounding voice, and com-

mented on by that expression which they called in the Parliament House "Hermiston's hanging face"—they struck mere dismay into the wife. She sat before him speechless and fluttering; at each dish, as at a fresh ordeal, her eye hovered toward my lord's countenance and fell again; if he but ate in silence, unspeakable relief was her portion; if there were complaint, the world was darkened. She would seek out the cook, who was always her *sister in the Lord.* "O, my dear, this is the most dreidful thing that my lord can never be contented in his own house!" she would begin; and weep and pray with the cook; and then the cook would pray with Mrs. Weir; and the next day's meal would never be a penny the better—and the next cook (when she came) would be worse, if anything, but just as pious. It was often wondered that Lord Hermiston bore it as he did; indeed he was a stoical old voluptuary, contented with sound wine and plenty of it. But there were moments when he overflowed. Perhaps half a dozen times in the history of his married life—"Here! tak' it awa', and bring me a piece bread and kebbuck!" he had exclaimed, with an appalling explosion of his voice and rare gestures. None thought to dispute or to make excuses; the service was arrested; Mrs. Weir sat at the head of the table whimpering without disguise; and his lordship opposite munched his bread and cheese in ostentatious disregard. Once only, Mrs. Weir had ventured to appeal. He was passing her chair on his way into the study.

"O, Edom!" she wailed, in a voice tragic with tears, and reaching out to him both hands, in one of which she held a sopping pocket-handkerchief.

He paused and looked upon her with a face of wrath, into which there stole, as he looked, a twinkle of humor.

"Noansense!" he said. "You and your noansense! What do I want with a Christian faim'ly? I want Christian broth! Get me a lass that can plain boil a potato, if she was a whüre off the streets." And with these words, which echoed in her tender ears like blasphemy, he had passed on to his study and shut the door behind him.

Such was the housewifery in George Square. It was better at Hermiston, where Kirstie Elliot, the sister of a neighbouring bonnet-laird, and an eighteenth cousin of the lady's, bore the charge of all, and kept a trim house and a good country table. Kirstie was a woman in a thousand, clean, capable, notable; once a moorland Helen, and still comely as a blood horse and healthy as the hill wind. High in flesh and voice and colour, she ran the house with her whole intemperate soul, in a bustle, not without buffets. Scarce more pious than decency in those days required, she was the cause of many an anxious thought and many a tearful prayer to Mrs. Weir. Housekeeper and mistress renewed the parts of Martha and Mary; and though with a pricking conscience, Mary reposed on Martha's strength as on a rock. Even Lord Hermiston held Kirstie in a particular regard. There were few with whom he unbent so gladly, few whom he favoured with so many pleasantries. "Kirstie and me maun have our joke," he would declare, in high good-humor, as he buttered Kirstie's scones and she waited at table. A man who had no need either of love or of popularity, a keen reader of

men and of events, there was perhaps only one truth for which he was quite unprepared: he would have been quite unprepared to learn that Kirstie hated him. He thought maid and master were well matched; hard, handy, healthy, broad Scots folk, without a hair of nonsense to the pair of them. And the fact was that she made a goddess and an only child of the effete and tearful lady; and even as she waited at table her hands would sometimes itch for my lord's ears.

Thus, at least, when the family were at Hermiston, not only my lord, but Mrs. Weir too, enjoyed a holiday. Free from the dreadful looking-for of the miscarried dinner, she would mind her seam, read her piety books, and take her walk (which was my lord's orders), sometimes by herself, sometimes with Archie, the only child of that scarce natural union. The child was her next bond to life. Her frosted sentiment bloomed again, she breathed deep of life, she let loose her heart, in that society. The miracle of her motherhood was ever new to her. The sight of the little man at her skirt intoxicated her with the sense of power, and froze her with the consciousness of her responsibility. She looked forward, and, seeing him in fancy grow up and play his diverse part on the world's theatre, caught in her breath and lifted up her courage with a lively effort. It was only with the child that she forgot herself and was at moments natural; yet it was only with the child that she had conceived and managed to pursue a scheme of conduct. Archie was to be a great man and a good; a minister if possible, a saint for certain. She tried to engage his mind upon her favourite books, Rutherford's "Letters," Scougal's

"Grace Abounding," and the like. It was a common practice of hers (and strange to remember now) that she would carry the child to the Deil's Hags, sit with him on the Praying Weaver's stone and talk of the Covenanters till their tears ran down. Her view of history was wholly artless, a design in snow and ink; upon the one side, tender innocents with psalms upon their lips; upon the other, the persecutors, booted, bloody-minded, flushed with wine; a suffering Christ, a raging Beelzebub. *Persecutor* was a word that knocked upon the woman's heart; it was her highest thought of wickedness, and the mark of it was on her house. Her great-great-grandfather had drawn the sword against the Lord's anointed on the field of Rullion Green, and breathed his last (tradition said) in the arms of the detestable Dalzell. Nor could she blind herself to this, that had they lived in these old days, Hermiston himself would have been numbered alongside of Bloody MacKenzie and the politic Lauderdale and Rothes, in the band of God's immediate enemies. The sense of this moved her to the more fervour; she had a voice for that name of *persecutor* that thrilled in the child's marrow; and when one day the mob hooted and hissed them all in my lord's traveling carriage, and cried, "Down with the persecutor! down with Hanging Hermiston!" and mamma covered her eyes and wept, and papa let down the glass and looked out upon the rabble with his droll formidable face, bitter and smiling, as they said he sometimes looked when he gave sentence, Archie was for the moment too much amazed to be alarmed, but he had scarce got his mother by herself before his shrill voice was raised

demanding an explanation; why had they called papa a persecutor?

"Keep me, my precious!" she exclaimed. "Keep me, my dear! this is poleetical. Ye must never ask me anything poleetical, Erchie. Your faither is a great man, my dear, and it's no for me or you to be judging him. It would be telling us all if we behaved ourselves in our several stations the way your faither does in his high office; and let me hear no more of any such disrespectful and undutiful questions! No that you meant to be undutiful, my lamb; your mother kens that — she kens it well, dearie!" and so slid off to safer topics, and left on the mind of the child an obscure but ineradicable sense of something wrong.

Mrs. Weir's philosophy of life was summed in one expression — tenderness. In her view of the universe, which was all lighted up with a glow out of the doors of hell, good people must walk there in a kind of ecstasy of tenderness. The beasts and plants had no souls; they were here but for a day, and let their day pass gently! And as for the immortal men, on what black, downward path were many of them wending, and to what a horror of an immortality! "Are not two sparrows," "Whosoever shall smite thee," "God sendeth His rain," "Judge not that ye be not judged" — these texts made her body of divinity; she put them on in the morning with her clothes and lay down to sleep with them at night; they haunted her like a favourite air, they clung about her like a favourite perfume. Their minister was a marrowy expounder of the law, and my lord sat under him with relish; but Mrs. Weir respected him from far off; heard him (like the cannon

of a beleaguered city) usefully booming outside on the dogmatic ramparts; and meanwhile, within and out of shot, dwelt in her private garden, which she watered with grateful tears. It seems strange to say of this colourless and ineffectual woman, but she was a true enthusiast, and might have made the sunshine and the glory of a cloister. Perhaps none but Archie knew she could be eloquent; perhaps none but he had seen her—her colour raised, her hands clasped or quivering—glow with gentle ardour. There is a corner of the policy of Hermiston, where you come suddenly in view of the summit of Black Fell, sometimes like the mere grass top of a hill, sometimes (and this is her own expression) like a precious jewel in the heavens. On such days, upon the sudden view of it, her hand would tighten on the child's fingers, her voice rise like a song. "I to the hills!" she would repeat. "And O, Erchie, are nae these like the hills of Naphtali?" and her easy tears would flow.

Upon an impressionable child the effect of this continual and pretty accompaniment to life was deep. The woman's quietism and piety passed on to his different nature undiminished; but whereas in her it was a native sentiment, in him it was only an implanted dogma. Nature and the child's pugnacity at times revolted. A cad from the Potterrow once struck him in the mouth; he struck back, the pair fought it out in the back stable lane towards the Meadows, and Archie returned with a considerable decline in the number of his front teeth, and unregenerately boasting of the losses of the foe. It was a sore day for Mrs. Weir; she wept and prayed over the infant backslider until my lord was

due from court, and she must resume that air of tremulous composure with which she always greeted him. The judge was that day in an observant mood, and remarked upon the absent teeth.

"I am afraid Erchie will have been fechting with some of they blagyard lads," said Mrs. Weir.

My lord's voice rang out as it did seldom in the privacy of his own house. "I'll have nonn of that, sir!" he cried. "Do you hear me?—nonn of that! No son of mine shall be speldering in the glaur with any dirty raibble."

The anxious mother was grateful for so much support; she had even feared the contrary. And that night when she put the child to bed—"Now, my dear, ye see!" she said, "I told you what your faither would think of it, if he heard ye had fallen into this dreidful sin; and let you and me pray to God that ye may be keepit from the like temptation or stren'thened to resist it!"

The womanly falsity of this was thrown away. Ice and iron cannot be welded; and the points of view of the Justice-Clerk and Mrs. Weir were not less unassimilable. The character and position of his father had long been a stumbling-block to Archie, and with every year of his age the difficulty grew more instant. The man was mostly silent; when he spoke at all, it was to speak of the things of the world, always in a worldly spirit, often in language that the child had been schooled to think coarse, and sometimes with words that he knew to be sins in themselves. Tenderness was the first duty, and my lord was invariably harsh. God was love; the name of my lord (to all who knew him) was

fear. In the world, as schematised for Archie by his mother, the place was marked for such a creature. There were some whom it was good to pity and well (though very likely useless) to pray for; they were named reprobates, goats, God's enemies, brands for the burning; and Archie tallied every mark of identification, and drew the inevitable private inference that the Lord Justice-Clerk was the chief of sinners.

The mother's honesty was scarce complete. There was one influence she feared for the child and still secretly combated; that was my lord's; and half unconsciously, half in a wilful blindness, she continued to undermine her husband with his son. As long as Archie remained silent, she did so ruthlessly, with a single eye to heaven and the child's salvation; but the day came when Archie spoke. It was 1801, and Archie was seven, and beyond his years for curiosity and logic, when he brought the case up openly. If judging were sinful and forbidden, how came papa to be a judge? to have that sin for a trade? to bear the name of it for a distinction?

"I can't see it," said the little Rabbi, and wagged his head.

Mrs. Weir abounded in commonplace replies.

"No, I cannae see it," reiterated Archie. "And I'll tell you what, mamma, I don't think you and me's justifeed in staying with him."

The woman awoke to remorse; she saw herself disloyal to her man, her sovereign and bread-winner, in whom (with what she had of worldliness) she took a certain subdued pride. She expatiated in reply on my lord's honour and greatness; his useful services in this

world of sorrow and wrong, and the place in which he stood, far above where babes and innocents could hope to see or criticise. But she had builded too well — Archie had his answers pat: Were not babes and innocents the type of the kingdom of heaven? Were not honour and greatness the badges of the world? And at any rate, how about the mob that had once seethed about the carriage?

"It's all very fine," he concluded, "but in my opinion, papa has no right to be it. And it seems that's not the worst yet of it. It seems he's called 'the Hanging Judge' — it seems he's crooool. I'll tell you what it is, mamma, there's a tex' borne in upon me: it were better for that man if a milestone were bound upon his back and him flung into the deepestmost pairts of the sea."

"O, my lamb, ye must never say the like of that!" she cried. "Ye're to honour faither and mother, dear, that your days may be long in the land. It's Atheists that cry out against him — French Atheists, Erchie! Ye would never surely even yourself down to be saying the same thing as French Atheists? It would break my heart to think that of you. And O, Erchie, here are'na *you* setting up to *judge?* And have ye no forgot God's plain command — the First with Promise, dear? Mind you upon the beam and the mote!"

Having thus carried the war into the enemy's camp, the terrified lady breathed again. And no doubt it is easy thus to circumvent a child with catchwords, but it may be questioned how far it is effectual. An instinct in his breast detects the quibble, and a voice condemns it. He will instantly submit, privately hold the same

opinion. For even in this simple and antique relation of the mother and the child, hypocrisies are multiplied.

When the Court rose that year and the family returned to Hermiston, it was a common remark in all the country that the lady was sore failed. She seemed to loose and seize again her touch with life, now sitting inert in a sort of durable bewilderment, anon waking to feverish and weak activity. She dawdled about the lasses at their work, looking stupidly on; she fell to rummaging in old cabinets and presses, and desisted when half through; she would begin remarks with an air of animation and drop them without a struggle. Her common appearance was of one who has forgotten something and is trying to remember; and when she overhauled, one after another, the worthless and touching mementoes of her youth, she might have been seeking the clue to that lost thought. During this period she gave many gifts to the neighbours and house lassies, giving them with a manner of regret that embarrassed the recipients.

The last night of all she was busy on some female work, and toiled upon it with so manifest and painful a devotion that my lord (who was not often curious) inquired as to its nature.

She blushed to the eyes. "O, Edom, it's for you!" she said. "It's slippers. I — I hae never made ye any."

"Ye daft auld wife!" returned his lordship. "A bonny figure I would be, palmering about in bauchles!"

The next day, at the hour of her walk, Kirstie interfered. Kirstie took this decay of her mistress very hard; bore her a grudge, quarrelled with and railed upon her, the anxiety of a genuine love wearing the disguise of

temper. This day of all days she insisted disrespectfully, with rustic fury, that Mrs. Weir should stay at home. But, "No, no," she said, "it's my lord's orders," and set forth as usual. Archie was visible in the acre bog, engaged upon some childish enterprise, the instrument of which was mire; and she stood and looked at him awhile like one about to call; then thought otherwise, sighed, and shook her head, and proceeded on her rounds alone. The house lassies were at the burnside washing, and saw her pass with her loose, weary, dowdy gait.

"She's a terrible feckless wife, the mistress!" said the one.

"Tut," said the other, "the wumman's seeck."

"Weel, I canna see nae differ in her," returned the first. "A fushionless quean, a feckless carline."

The poor creature thus discussed rambled a while in the grounds without a purpose. Tides in her mind ebbed and flowed, and carried her to and fro like seaweed. She tried a path, paused, returned, and tried another; questing, forgetting her quest; the spirit of choice extinct in her bosom, or devoid of sequency. On a sudden, it appeared as though she had remembered, or had formed a resolution, wheeled about, returned with hurried steps, and appeared in the dining-room, where Kirstie was at the cleaning, like one charged with an important errand.

"Kirstie!" she began, and paused; and then with conviction, "Mr. Weir isna speeritually minded, but he has been a good man to me."

It was perhaps the first time since her husband's elevation that she had forgotten the handle to his name,

of which the tender, inconsistent woman was not a little proud. And when Kirstie looked up at the speaker's face, she was aware of a change.

"Godsake, what's the maitter wi' ye, mem?" cried the housekeeper, starting from the rug.

"I do not ken," answered her mistress, shaking her head. "But he is not speeritually minded, my dear."

"Here, sit down with ye! Godsake, what ails the wife?" cried Kirstie, and helped and forced her into my lord's own chair by the cheek of the hearth.

"Keep me, what's this?" she gasped. "Kirstie, what's this? I'm frich'ened."

They were her last words.

It was the lowering nightfall when my lord returned. He had the sunset in his back, all clouds and glory; and before him, by the wayside, spied Kirstie Elliott waiting. She was dissolved in tears, and addressed him in the high, false note of barbarous mourning, such as still lingers modified among Scots heather.

"The Lord peety ye, Hermiston! the Lord prepare ye!" she keened out. "Weary upon me, that I should have to tell it!"

He reined in his horse and looked upon her with the hanging face.

"Has the French landit?" cried he.

"Man, man," she said, "is that a' ye can think of? The Lord prepare ye, the Lord comfort and support ye!"

"Is onybody deid?" says his lordship. "It's no Erchie?"

"Bethankit, no!" exclaimed the woman, startled in-

to a more natural tone. "Na, na, it's no sae bad as that. It's the mistress, my lord; she just fair flittit before my e'en. She just gi'ed a sab and was by with it. Eh, my bonny Miss Jeannie, that I mind sae weel!" And forth again upon that pouring tide of lamentation in which women of her class excel and overabound.

Lord Hermiston sat in the saddle beholding her. Then he seemed to recover command upon himself.

"Weel, it's something of the suddenest," said he. "But she was a dwaibly body from the first."

And he rode home at a precipitate amble with Kirstie at his horse's heels.

Dressed as she was for her last walk, they had laid the dead lady on her bed. She was never interesting in life; in death she was not impressive; and as her husband stood before her, with his hands crossed behind his powerful back, that which he looked upon was the very image of the insignificant.

"Her and me were never cut out for one another," he remarked at last. "It was a daft-like marriage." And then, with a most unusual gentleness of tone, "Puir bitch," said he, "puir bitch!" Then suddenly: "Where's Erchie?"

Kirstie had decoyed him to her room and given him "a jeely-piece."

"Ye have some kind of gumption, too," observed the Judge, and considered his housekeeper grimly. "When all's said," he added, "I micht have done waur — I micht have been marriet upon a skirling Jezebel like you!"

"There's naebody thinking of you, Hermiston!"

cried the offended woman. "We think of her that's out of her sorrows. And could *she* have done waur? Tell me that, Hermiston — tell me that before her clay-cauld corp!"

"Weel, there's some of them gey an' ill to please," observed his lordship.

CHAPTER II

FATHER AND SON

My Lord Justice-Clerk was known to many; the man Adam Weir perhaps to none. He had nothing to explain or to conceal; he sufficed wholly and silently to himself; and that part of our nature which goes out (too often with false coin) to acquire glory or love, seemed in him to be omitted. He did not try to be loved, he did not care to be; it is probable the very thought of it was a stranger to his mind. He was an admired lawyer, a highly unpopular judge; and he looked down upon those who were his inferiors in either distinction, who were lawyers of less grasp or judges not so much detested. In all the rest of his days and doings, not one trace of vanity appeared; and he went on through life with a mechanical movement, as of the unconscious, that was almost august.

He saw little of his son. In the childish maladies with which the boy was troubled, he would make daily inquiries and daily pay him a visit, entering the sick-room with a facetious and appalling countenance, letting off a few perfunctory jests, and going again swiftly, to the patient's relief. Once, a court holiday falling opportunely, my lord had his carriage, and drove the child himself to Hermiston, the customary place of conva-

lescence. It is conceivable he had been more than usually anxious, for that journey always remained in Archie's memory as a thing apart, his father having related to him from beginning to end, and with much detail, three authentic murder cases. Archie went the usual round of other Edinburgh boys, the high school and the college; and Hermiston looked on, or rather looked away, with scarce an affectation of interest in his progress. Daily, indeed, upon a signal after dinner, he was brought in, given nuts and a glass of port, regarded sardonically, sarcastically questioned. "Well, sir, and what have you donn with your book to-day?" my lord might begin, and set him posers in law Latin. To a child just stumbling into Corderius, Papinian and Paul proved quite invincible. But papa had memory of no other. He was not harsh to the little scholar, having a vast fund of patience learned upon the bench, and was at no pains whether to conceal or to express his disappointment. "Well, ye have a long jaunt before ye yet!" he might observe, yawning, and fall back on his own thoughts (as like as not) until the time came for separation, and my lord would take the decanter and the glass, and be off to the back chamber looking on the Meadows, where he toiled on his cases till the hours were small. There was no "fuller man" on the Bench; his memory was marvellous, though wholly legal; if he had to "advise" extempore, none did it better; yet there was none who more earnestly prepared. As he thus watched in the night, or sat at table and forgot the presence of his son, no doubt but he tasted deeply of recondite pleasures. To be wholly devoted to some intellectual exercise is to have succeeded in life;

and perhaps only in law and the higher mathematics may this devotion be maintained, suffice to itself without reaction, and find continual rewards without excitement. This atmosphere of his father's sterling industry was the best of Archie's education. Assuredly it did not attract him; assuredly it rather rebutted and depressed. Yet it was still present, unobserved like the ticking of a clock, an arid ideal, a tasteless stimulant in the boy's life.

But Hermiston was not all of one piece. He was, besides, a mighty toper; he could sit at wine until the day dawned, and pass directly from the table to the Bench with a steady hand and a clear head. Beyond the third bottle, he showed the plebeian in a larger print; the low, gross accent, the low, foul mirth, grew broader and commoner; he became less formidable, and infinitely more disgusting. Now, the boy had inherited from Jean Rutherford a shivering delicacy, unequally mated with potential violence. In the playing-fields, and amongst his own companions, he repaid a coarse expression with a blow; at his father's table (when the time came for him to join these revels) he turned pale and sickened in silence. Of all the guests whom he there encountered, he had toleration for only one: David Keith Carnegie, Lord Glenalmond. Lord Glenalmond was tall and emaciated, with long features and long delicate hands. He was often compared with the statue of Forbes of Culloden in the Parliament House; and his blue eye, at more than sixty, preserved some of the fire of youth. His exquisite disparity with any of his fellow guests, his appearance as of an artist and an aristocrat stranded in rude company, riveted the boy's attention;

and as curiosity and interest are the things in the world that are the most immediately and certainly rewarded, Lord Glenalmond was attracted to the boy.

"And so this is your son, Hermiston?" he asked, laying his hand on Archie's shoulder. "He's getting a big lad."

"Hout!" said the gracious father, "just his mother over again — daurna say boo to a goose!"

But the stranger retained the boy, talked to him, drew him out, found in him a taste for letters, and a fine, ardent, modest, youthful soul; and encouraged him to be a visitor on Sunday evenings in his bare, cold, lonely dining-room, where he sat and read in the isolation of a bachelor grown old in refinement. The beautiful gentleness and grace of the old Judge, and the delicacy of his person, thoughts, and language, spoke to Archie's heart in its own tongue. He conceived the ambition to be such another; and, when the day came for him to choose a profession, it was in emulation of Lord Glenalmond, not of Lord Hermiston, that he chose the Bar. Hermiston looked on at this friendship with some secret pride, but openly with the intolerance of scorn. He scarce lost an opportunity to put them down with a rough jape; and, to say truth, it was not difficult, for they were neither of them quick. He had a word of contempt for the whole crowd of poets, painters, fiddlers, and their admirers, the bastard race of amateurs, which was continually on his lips. "Signor Feedle-eerie!" he would say. "Oh, for Goad's sake, no more of the signor!"

"You and my father are great friends, are you not?" asked Archie once.

"There is no man that I more respect, Archie," replied Lord Glenalmond. "He is two things of price. He is a great lawyer, and he is upright as the day."

"You and he are so different," said the boy, his eyes dwelling on those of his old friend, like a lover's on his mistress's.

"Indeed so," replied the Judge; "very different. And so I fear are you and he. Yet I would like it very ill if my young friend were to misjudge his father. He has all the Roman virtues: Cato and Brutus were such; I think a son's heart might well be proud of such an ancestry of one."

"And I would sooner he were a plaided herd," cried Archie, with sudden bitterness.

"And that is neither very wise, nor I believe entirely true," returned Glenalmond. "Before you are done you will find some of these expressions rise on you like a remorse. They are merely literary and decorative; they do not aptly express your thought, nor is your thought clearly apprehended, and no doubt your father (if he were here) would say 'Signor Feedle-eerie!'"

With the infinitely delicate sense of youth, Archie avoided the subject from that hour. It was perhaps a pity. Had he but talked — talked freely — let himself gush out in words (the way youth loves to do and should), there might have been no tale to write upon the Weirs of Hermiston. But the shadow of a threat of ridicule sufficed; in the slight tartness of these words he read a prohibition; and it is likely that Glenalmond meant it so.

Besides the veteran, the boy was without confidant or friend. Serious and eager, he came through school

and college, and moved among a crowd of the indifferent, in the seclusion of his shyness. He grew up handsome, with an open, speaking countenance, with graceful, youthful ways; he was clever, he took prizes, he shone in the Speculative Society.[1] It should seem he must become the centre of a crowd of friends; but something that was in part the delicacy of his mother, in part the austerity of his father, held him aloof from all. It is a fact, and a strange one, that among his contemporaries Hermiston's son was thought to be a chip of the old block. "You're a friend of Archie Weir's?" said one to Frank Innes; and Innes replied, with his usual flippancy and more than his usual insight: "I know Weir, but I never met Archie." No one had met Archie, a malady most incident to only sons. He flew his private signal, and none heeded it; it seemed he was abroad in a world from which the very hope of intimacy was banished; and he looked round about him on the concourse of his fellow-students, and forward to the trivial days and acquaintances that were to come, without hope or interest.

As time went on, the tough and rough old sinner felt himself drawn to the son of his loins and sole continuator of his new family, with softnesses of sentiment that he could hardly credit and was wholly impotent to express. With a face, voice and manner trained through forty years to terrify and repel, Rhadamanthus may be great, but he will scarce be engaging. It is a fact that he tried to propitiate Archie, but a fact that cannot be too lightly taken; the attempt was so unconspicuously made, the failure so stoically supported. Sympathy is

[1] A famous debating society of the students of Edinburgh University.

not due to these steadfast iron natures. If he failed to gain his son's friendship, or even his son's toleration, on he went up the great, bare staircase of his duty, uncheered and undepressed. There might have been more pleasure in his relations with Archie, so much he may have recognized at moments; but pleasure was a by-product of the singular chemistry of life, which only fools expected.

An idea of Archie's attitude, since we are all grown up and have forgotten the days of our youth, it is more difficult to convey. He made no attempt whatsoever to understand the man with whom he dined and breakfasted. Parsimony of pain, glut of pleasure, these are the two alternating ends of youth; and Archie was of the parsimonious. The wind blew cold out of a certain quarter — he turned his back upon it; stayed as little as was possible in his father's presence; and when there, averted his eyes as much as was decent from his father's face. The lamp shone for many hundred days upon these two at table — my lord ruddy, gloomy, and unreverent; Archie with a potential brightness that was always dimmed and veiled in that society; and there were not, perhaps, in Christendom two men more radically strangers. The father, with a grand simplicity, either spoke of what interested himself, or maintained an unaffected silence. The son turned in his head for some topic that should be quite safe, that would spare him fresh evidences either of my lord's inherent grossness or of the innocence of his inhumanity; treading gingerly the ways of intercourse, like a lady gathering up her skirts in a by-path. If he made a mistake, and my lord began to abound in matter of offence, Archie

drew himself up, his brow grew dark, his share of the talk expired; but my lord would faithfully and cheerfully continue to pour out the worst of himself before his silent and offended son.

"Well, it's a poor hert that never rejoices," he would say, at the conclusion of such a nightmare interview. "But I must get to my plew-stilts." And he would seclude himself as usual in the back room, and Archie go forth into the night and the city quivering with animosity and scorn.

CHAPTER III

IN THE MATTER OF THE HANGING OF DUNCAN JOPP

It chanced in the year 1813 that Archie strayed one day into the Judiciary Court. The macer made room for the son of the presiding judge. In the dock, the centre of men's eyes, there stood a whey-coloured, misbegotten caitiff, Duncan Jopp, on trial for his life. His story, as it was raked out before him in that public scene, was one of disgrace and vice and cowardice, the very nakedness of crime; and the creature heard and it seemed at times as though he understood — as if at times he forgot the horror of the place he stood in, and remembered the shame of what had brought him there. He kept his head bowed and his hands clutched upon the rail; his hair dropped in his eyes and at times he flung it back; and now he glanced about the audience in a sudden fellness of terror, and now looked in the face of his judge and gulped. There was pinned about his throat a piece of dingy flannel; and this it was perhaps that turned the scale in Archie's mind between disgust and pity. The creature stood in a vanishing point; yet a little while, and he was still a man, and had eyes and apprehension; yet a little longer, and with a last sordid piece of pageantry, he would cease

to be. And here, in the meantime, with a trait of human nature that caught at the beholder's breath, he was tending a sore throat.

Over against him, my Lord Hermiston occupied the bench in the red robes of criminal jurisdiction, his face framed in the white wig. Honest all through, he did not affect the virtue of impartiality; this was no case for refinement; there was a man to be hanged, he would have said, and he was hanging him. Nor was it possible to see his lordship, and acquit him of gusto in the task. It was plain he gloried in the exercise of his trained faculties, in the clear sight which pierced at once into the joint of fact, in the rude, unvarnished jibes with which he demolished every figment of defence. He took his ease and jested, unbending in that solemn place with some of the freedom of the tavern; and the rag of man with the flannel round his neck was hunted gallowsward with jeers.

Duncan had a mistress, scarce less forlorn and greatly older than himself, who came up, whimpering and curtseying, to add the weight of her betrayal. My lord gave her the oath in his most roaring voice and added an intolerant warning.

"Mind what ye say now, Janet," said he. "I have an e'e upon ye; I'm ill to jest with."

Presently, after she was tremblingly embarked on her story, "And what made ye do this, ye auld runt?" the Court interposed. "Do ye mean to tell me ye was the pannel's mistress?"

"If you please, ma loard," whined the female.

"Godsake! ye made a bonny couple," observed his lordship; and there was something so formidable and

ferocious in his scorn that not even the galleries thought to laugh.

The summing up contained some jewels.

"These two peetiable creatures seem to have made up thegither, it's not for us to explain why."—"The pannel, who (whatever else he may be) appears to be equally ill set out in mind and boady."—"Neither the pannel nor yet the old wife appears to have had so much common sense as even to tell a lie when it was necessary." And in the course of sentencing, my lord had this *obiter dictum:* "I have been the means, under God, of haanging a great number, but never just such a disjaskit rascal as yourself." The words were strong in themselves; the light and heat and detonation of their delivery, and the savage pleasure of the speaker in his task, made them tingle in the ears.

When all was over, Archie came forth again into a changed world. Had there been the least redeeming greatness in the crime, any obscurity, any dubiety, perhaps he might have understood. But the culprit stood, with his sore throat, in the sweat of his mortal agony, without defence or excuse; a thing to cover up with blushes; a being so much sunk beneath the zones of sympathy that pity might seem harmless. And the judge had pursued him with a monstrous, relishing gaiety, horrible to be conceived, a trait for nightmares. It is one thing to spear a tiger, another to crush a toad; there are æsthetics even of the slaughter-house; and the loathsomeness of Duncan Jopp enveloped and infected the image of his judge.

Archie passed by his friends in the High Street with incoherent words and gestures. He saw Holyrood in

a dream, remembrance of its romance awoke in him and faded; he had a vision of the old radiant stories, of Queen Mary and Prince Charlie, of the hooded stag, of the splendor and crime, the velvet and bright iron of the past; and dismissed them with a cry of pain. He lay and moaned in the Hunter's Bog, and the heavens were dark above him and the grass of the field an offence. "This is my father," he said. "I draw my life from him; the flesh upon my bones is his, the bread I am fed with is the wages of these horrors." He recalled his mother, and ground his forehead in the earth. He thought of flight, and where was he to flee to? of other lives, but was there any life worth living in this den of savage and jeering animals?

The interval before the execution was like a violent dream. He met his father; he would not look at him, he could not speak to him. It seemed there was no living creature but must have been swift to recognize that imminent animosity, but the hide of the Lord Justice-Clerk remained impenetrable. Had my lord been talkative, the truce could never have subsisted; but he was by fortune in one of his humors of sour silence; and under the very guns of his broadside Archie nursed the enthusiasm of rebellion. It seemed to him, from the top of his nineteen years' experience, as if he were marked at birth to be the perpetrator of some signal action, to set back fallen Mercy, to overthrow the usurping devil that sat, horned and hoofed, on her throne. Seductive Jacobin figments, which he had often refuted at the Speculative, swam up in his mind and startled him as with voices; and he seemed to him-

self to walk accompanied by an almost tangible presence of new beliefs and duties.

On the named morning he was at the place of execution. He saw the fleering rabble, the flinching wretch produced. He looked on for awhile at a certain parody of devotion, which seemed to strip the wretch of his last claim to manhood. Then followed the brutal instant of extinction, and the paltry dangling of the remains like a broken jumping-jack. He had been prepared for something terrible, not for this tragic meanness. He stood a moment silent, and then — "I denounce this God-defying murder," he shouted; and his father, if he must have disclaimed the sentiment, might have owned the stentorian voice with which it was uttered.

Frank Innes dragged him from the spot. The two handsome lads followed the same course of study and recreation, and felt a certain mutual attraction, founded mainly on good looks. It had never gone deep; Frank was by nature a thin, jeering creature, not truly susceptible whether of feeling or inspiring friendship; and the relation between the pair was altogether on the outside, a thing of common knowledge and the pleasantries that spring from a common acquaintance. The more credit to Frank that he was appalled by Archie's outburst, and at least conceived the design of keeping him in sight, and, if possible, in hand, for the day. But Archie, who had just defied — was it God or Satan? — would not listen to the word of a college companion.

"I will not go with you," he said. "I do not desire your company, sir; I would be alone."

"Here, Weir, man, don't be absurd," said Innes, keeping a tight hold upon his sleeve. "I will not let

you go until I know what you mean to do with yourself; it's no use brandishing that staff." For indeed at that moment Archie had made a sudden — perhaps a warlike — movement. "This has been the most insane affair; you know it has. You know very well that I'm playing the good Samaritan. All I wish is to keep you quiet."

"If quietness is what you wish, Mr. Innes," said Archie, "and you will promise to leave me entirely to myself, I will tell you so much, that I am going to walk in the country and admire the beauties of nature."

"Honor bright?" asked Frank.

"I am not in the habit of lying, Mr. Innes," retorted Archie. "I have the honor of wishing you good-day."

"You won't forget the Spec.?" asked Innes.

"The Spec.?" said Archie. "Oh, no, I won't forget the Spec."

And the one young man carried his tortured spirit forth of the city and all the day long, by one road and another, in an endless pilgrimage of misery; while the other hastened smilingly to spread the news of Weir's access of insanity, and to drum up for that night a full attendance at the Speculative, where farther eccentric developments might certainly be looked for. I doubt if Innes had the least belief in his prediction; I think it flowed rather from a wish to make the story as good and the scandal as great as possible; not from any ill-will to Archie — from the mere pleasure of beholding interested faces. But for all that his words were prophetic. Archie did not forget the Spec.; he put in an appearance there at the due time, and, before the evening was over, had dealt a memorable shock to his com-

panions. It chanced he was the president of the night. He sat in the same room where the society still meets — only the portraits were not there; the men who afterwards sat for them were then but beginning their career. The same lustre of many tapers shed its light over the meeting; the same chair, perhaps, supported him that so many of us have sat in since. At times he seemed to forget the business of the evening, but even in these periods he sat with a great air of energy and determination. At times he meddled bitterly and launched with defiance those fines which are the precious and rarely used artillery of the president. He little thought, as he did so, how he resembled his father, but his friends remarked upon it, chuckling. So far, in his high place above his fellow-students, he seemed set beyond the possibility of any scandal; but his mind was made up — he was determined to fulfil the sphere of his offence. He signed to Innes (whom he had just fined, and who just impeached his ruling) to succeed him in the chair, stepped down from the platform, and took his place by the chimney-piece, the shine of many wax tapers from above illuminating his pale face, the glow of the great red fire relieving from behind his slim figure. He had to propose, as an amendment to the next subject in the case book, "Whether capital punishment be consistent with God's will or man's policy?"

A breath of embarrassment, of something like alarm, passed round the room, so daring did these words appear upon the lips of Hermiston's only son. But the amendment was not seconded; the previous question was promptly moved and unanimously voted, and the momentary scandal smuggled by. Innes triumphed in

the fulfilment of his prophecy. He and Archie were now become the heroes of the night; but whereas everyone crowded about Innes, when the meeting broke up, but one of all his companions came to speak to Archie.

"Weir, man! that was an extraordinary raid of yours!" observed this courageous member, taking him confidentially by the arm as they went out.

"I don't think it a raid," said Archie grimly. "More like a war. I saw that poor brute hanged this morning, and my gorge rises at it yet."

"Hut-tut!" returned his companion, and, dropping his arm like something hot, he sought the less tense society of others.

Archie found himself alone. The last of the faithful — or was it only the boldest of the curious? — had fled. He watched the black huddle of his fellow-students draw off down and up the street, in whispering or boisterous gangs. And the isolation of the moment weighed upon him like an omen and an emblem of his destiny in life. Bred up in unbroken fear himself, among trembling servants, and in a house which (at the least ruffle in the master's voice) shuddered into silence, he saw himself on the brink of the red valley of war, and measured the danger and length of it with awe. He made a détour in the glimmer and shadow of the streets, came into the back stable lane, and watched for a long while the light burn steady in the Judge's room. The longer he gazed upon that illuminated window-blind, the more blank became the picture of the man who sat behind it, endlessly turning over sheets of process, pausing to sip a glass of port, or rising and passing

heavily about his book-lined walls to verify some reference. He could not combine the brutal judge and the industrious, dispassionate student; the connecting link escaped him; from such a dual nature, it was impossible he should predict behaviour; and he asked himself if he had done well to plunge into a business of which the end could not be foreseen; and presently after, with a sickening decline of confidence, if he had done loyally to strike his father. For he had struck him — defied him twice over and before a cloud of witnesses — struck him a public buffet before crowds. Who had called him to judge his father in these precarious and high questions? The office was usurped. It might have become a stranger; in a son — there was no blinking it — in a son, it was disloyal. And now, between these two natures so antipathetic, so hateful to each other, there was depending an unpardonable affront: and the providence of God alone might foresee the manner in which it would be resented by Lord Hermiston.

These misgivings tortured him all night and arose with him in the winter's morning; they followed him from class to class, they made him shrinkingly sensitive to every shade of manner in his companions, they sounded in his ears through the current voice of the professor; and he brought them home with him at night unabated and indeed increased. The cause of this increase lay in a chance encounter with the celebrated Dr. Gregory. Archie stood looking vaguely in the lighted window of a book shop, trying to nerve himself for the approaching ordeal. My lord and he had met and parted in the morning as they had now

done for long, with scarcely the ordinary civilities of life; and it was plain to the son that nothing had yet reached the father's ears. Indeed, when he recalled the awful countenance of my lord, a timid hope sprang up in him that perhaps there would be found no one bold enough to carry tales. If this were so, he asked himself, would he begin again? and he found no answer. It was at this moment that a hand was laid upon his arm, and a voice said in his ear, "My dear Mr. Archie, you had better come and see me."

He started, turned around, and found himself face to face with Dr. Gregory. "And why should I come to see you?" he asked, with the defiance of the miserable.

"Because you are looking exceeding ill," said the doctor, "and you very evidently want looking after, my young friend. Good folk are scarce, you know; and it is not everyone that would be quite so much missed as yourself. It is not everyone that Hermiston would miss."

And with a nod and smile, the doctor passed on.

A moment after, Archie was in pursuit, and had in turn, but more roughly, seized him by the arm.

"What do you mean? what did you mean by saying that? What makes you think that Hermis — my father would have missed me?"

The doctor turned about and looked him all over with a clinical eye. A far more stupid man than Dr. Gregory might have guessed the truth; but ninety-nine out of a hundred, even if they had been equally inclined to kindness, would have blundered by some touch of charitable exaggeration. The doctor was better inspired. He

knew the father well; in that white face of intelligence and suffering, he divined something of the son; and he told, without apology or adornment, the plain truth.

"When you had the measles, Mr. Archibald, you had them gey and ill; and I thought you were going to slip between my fingers," he said. "Well, your father was anxious. How did I know it? says you. Simply because I am a trained observer. The sign that I saw him make, ten thousand would have missed; and perhaps—*perhaps,* I say, because he's a hard man to judge of—but perhaps he never made another. A strange thing to consider! It was this. One day I came to him: 'Hermiston,' said I, 'there's a change.' He never said a word, just glowered at me (if ye'll pardon the phrase) like a wild beast. 'A change for the better,' said I. And I distinctly heard him take his breath."

The doctor left no opportunity for anti-climax; nodding his cocked hat (a piece of antiquity to which he clung) and repeating "Distinctly" with raised eyebrows, he took his departure, and left Archie speechless in the street.

The anecdote might be called infinitely little, and yet its meaning for Archie was immense. "I did not know the old man had so much blood in him." He had never dreamed this sire of his, this aboriginal antique, this adamantine Adam, had even so much of a heart as to be moved in the least degree for another—and that other himself, who had insulted him! With the generosity of youth, Archie was instantly under arms upon the other side: had instantly created a new image of Lord Hermiston, that of a man who was all iron without and all sensibility within. The mind of the vile jester, the

tongue that had pursued Duncan Jopp with unmanly insults, the unbeloved countenance that he had known and feared for so long, were all forgotten; and he hastened home, impatient to confess his misdeeds, impatient to throw himself on the mercy of this imaginary character.

He was not to be long without a rude awakening. It was in the gloaming when he drew near the doorstep of the lighted house, and was aware of the figure of his father approaching from the opposite side. Little daylight lingered; but on the door being opened, the strong yellow shine of the lamp gushed out upon the landing and shone full on Archie, as he stood, in the old-fashioned observance of respect, to yield precedence. The Judge came without haste, stepping stately and firm; his chin raised, his face (as he entered the lamplight) strongly illumined, his mouth set hard. There was never a wink of change in his expression; without looking to the right or left, he mounted the stair, passed close to Archie, and entered the house. Instinctively, the boy, upon his first coming, had made a movement to meet him; instinctively, he recoiled against the railing, as the old man swept by him in a pomp of indignation. Words were needless; he knew all — perhaps more than all — and the hour of judgment was at hand.

It is possible that, in this sudden revulsion of hope and before these symptoms of impending danger, Archie might have fled. But not even that was left to him. My lord, after hanging up his cloak and hat, turned round in the lighted entry, and made him an imperative and silent gesture with his thumb, and with the strange instinct of obedience, Archie followed him into the house.

All dinner time there reigned over the Judge's table a palpable silence, and as soon as the solids were despatched he rose to his feet.

"M'Killop, tak' the wine into my room," said he; and then to his son: "Archie, you and me has to have a talk."

It was at this sickening moment that Archie's courage, for the first and last time, entirely deserted him. "I have an appointment," said he.

"It'll have to be broken, then," said Hermiston, and led the way into his study.

The lamp was shaded, the fire trimmed to a nicety, the table covered deep with orderly documents, the backs of law books made a frame upon all sides that was only broken by the window and the doors.

For a moment Hermiston warmed his hands at the fire, presenting his back to Archie; then suddenly disclosed on him the terrors of the Hanging Face.

"What's this I hear of ye!" he asked.

There was no answer possible to Archie.

"I'll have to tell ye, then," pursued Hermiston. "It seems ye've been skirling against the father that begot ye, and one of His Maijesty's Judges in this land; and that in the public street, and while an order of the Court was being executit. Forbye which, it would appear that ye've been airing your opeenions in a Coallege Debatin' Society," he paused a moment: and, then, with extraordinary bitterness, added: "Ye damned eediot."

"I had meant to tell you," stammered Archie. "I see you are well informed."

"Muckle obleeged to ye," said his lordship, and took

his usual seat. "And so you disapprove of caapital punishment?" he added.

"I am sorry, sir, I do," said Archie.

"I am sorry, too," said his lordship. "And now, if you please, we shall approach this business with a little more parteecularity. I hear that at the hanging of Duncan Jopp — and, man! ye had a fine client there — in the middle of all the riffraff of the ceety, ye thought fit to cry out, 'This is a damned murder, and my gorge rises at the man that haangit him.'"

"No, sir, these were not my words," cried Archie.

"What were ye'r words, then?" asked the Judge.

"I believe I said, 'I denounce it as a murder!'" said the son, "I beg your pardon — a God-defying murder. I have no wish to conceal the truth," he added, and looked his father for a moment in the face.

"God, it would only need that of it next!" cried Hermiston. "There was nothing about your gorge rising, then?"

"That was afterwards, my lord, as I was leaving the Speculative. I said I had been to see the miserable creature hanged, and my gorge rose at it."

"Did ye, though?" said Hermiston. "And I suppose ye knew who haangit him?"

"I was present at the trial, I ought to tell you that, I ought to explain. I ask your pardon beforehand for any expression that may seem undutiful. The position in which I stand is wretched," said the unhappy hero, now fairly face to face with the business he had chosen. "I have been reading some of your cases. I was present while Jopp was tried. It was a hideous business. Father, it was a hideous thing! Grant he was vile,

why should you hunt him with a vileness equal to his own? It was done with glee — that is the word — you did it with glee; and I looked on, God help me! with horror."

"You're a young gentleman that doesna approve of caapital punishment," said Hermiston. "Weel, I'm an auld man that does. I was glad to get Jopp haangit, and what for would I pretend I wasna? You're all for honesty, it seems; you couldn't even steik your mouth on the public street. What for should I steik mines upon the bench, the King's officer, bearing the sword, a dreid to evil-doers, as I was from the beginning, and as I will be to the end! Mair than enough of it! Heedious! I never gave twa thoughts to heediousness, I have no call to be bonny I'm a man that gets through with my day's business, and let that suffice."

The ring of sarcasm had died out of his voice as he went on; the plain words became invested with some of the dignity of the justice-seat.

"It would be telling you if you could say as much," the speaker resumed. "But ye cannot. "Ye've been reading some of my cases, ye say. But it was not for the law in them, it was to spy out your faither's nakedness, a fine employment in a son. You're splairging; you're running at lairge in life like a wild nowt. It's impossible you should think any longer of coming to the Bar. You're not fit for it; no splairger is. And another thing: son of mines or no son of mines, you have flung fylement in public on one of the Senators of the Coallege of Justice, and I would make it my business to see that ye were never admitted there yourself. There is a kind of a decency to be observit. Then comes

the next of it — what am I to do with ye next? Ye'll have to find some kind of a trade, for I'll never support ye in idleset. What do ye fancy ye'll be fit for? The pulpit? Na, they could never get diveenity into that bloackhead. Him that the law of man whammles is no likely to do muckle better by the law of God. What would ye make of hell? Wouldna your gorge rise at that? Na, there's no room for splairgers under the fower quarters of John Calvin. What else is there? Speak up. Have ye got nothing of your own?"

"Father, let me go to the Peninsula," said Archie. "That's all I'm fit for — to fight."

"All? quo' he!" returned the Judge. "And it would be enough too, if I thought it. But I'll never trust ye so near the French, you that's so Frenchifeed."

"You do me injustice there, sir," said Archie. "I am loyal; I will not boast; but any interest I may have ever felt in the French —"

"Have ye been so loyal to to me?" interrupted his father.

There came no reply.

"I think not," continued Hermiston. "And I would send no man to be a servant to the King, God bless him! that has proved such a shauchling son to his own faither. You can splairge here on Edinburgh street, and where's the hairm? It doesna play buff on me! And if there were twenty thousand eediots like yourself, sorrow a Duncan Jopp would hang the fewer. But there's no splairging possible in a camp; and if you were to go to it, you would find out for yourself whether Lord Well'n'ton approves of caapital punishment or not. You a sodger!" he cried, with a sudden burst of scorn.

"Ye auld wife, the sodgers would bray at ye like cuddies!"

As at the drawing of a curtain, Archie was aware of some illogicality in his position, and stood abashed. He had a strong impression, besides, of the essential valour of the old gentleman before him, how conveyed it would be hard to say.

"Well, have ye no other proposeetion?" said my lord again.

"You have taken this so calmly, sir, that I cannot but stand ashamed," began Archie.

"I'm nearer voamiting, though, than you would fancy," said my lord.

The blood rose to Archie's brow.

"I beg your pardon, I should have said that you had accepted my affront. . . . I admit it was an affront; I did not think to apologise, but I do, I ask your pardon; it will not be so again, I pass you my word of honour. . . . I should have said that I admired your magnanimity with — this — offender," Archie concluded with a gulp.

"I have no other son, ye see," said Hermiston. "A bonny one I have gotten! But I must just do the best I can wi' him, and what am I to do? If ye had been younger, I would have wheepit ye for this rideeculous exhibeetion. The way it is, I have just to grin and bear. But one thing is to be clearly understood. As a faither, I must grin and bear it; but if I had been the Lord Advocate instead of the Lord Justice-Clerk, son or no son, Mr. Erchibald Weir would have been in a jyle the night."

Archie was now dominated. Lord Hermiston was coarse and cruel; and yet the son was aware of a

bloomless nobility, an ungracious abnegation of the man's self in the man's office. At every word, this sense of the greatness of Lord Hermiston's spirit struck more home; and along with it that of his own impotence, who had struck — and perhaps basely struck — at his own father, and not reached so far as to have even nettled him.

"I place myself in your hands without reserve," he said.

"That's the first sensible word I've had of ye the night," said Hermiston. "I can tell ye, that would have been the end of it, the one way or the other; but it's better ye should come there yourself, than what I would have had to hirstle ye. Weel, by my way of it — and my way is the best — there's just the one thing it's possible that ye might be with decency, and that's a laird. Ye'll be out of hairm's way at the least of it. If ye have to rowt, ye can rowt amang the kye; and the maist feck of the caapital punishment ye're like to come across'll be guddling trouts. Now, I'm for no idle lairdies; every man has to work, if it's only at peddling ballants; to work, or to be wheeped, or to be haangit. If I set ye down at Hermiston, I'll have to see you work that place the way it has never been workit yet; ye must ken about the sheep like a herd; ye must be my grieve there, and I'll see that I gain by ye. Is that understood?"

"I will do my best," said Archie.

"Well, then, I'll send Kirstie word the morn, and ye can go yourself the day after," said Hermiston. "And just try to be less of an eediot!" he concluded, with a freezing smile, and turned immediately to the papers on his desk.

CHAPTER IV

OPINION OF THE BENCH

LATE the same night, after a disordered walk, Archie was admitted into Lord Glenalmond's dining-room where he sat, with a book upon his knee, beside three frugal coals of fire. In his robes upon the bench, Glenalmond had a certain air of burliness: plucked of these, it was a may-pole of a man that rose unsteadily from his chair to give his visitor welcome. Archie had suffered much in the last days, he had suffered again that evening; his face was white and drawn, his eyes wild and dark. But Lord Glenalmond greeted him without the least mark of surprise or curiosity.

"Come in, come in," said he. "Come in and take a seat. Carstairs" (to his servant), "make up the fire, and then you can bring a bit of supper," and again to Archie, with a very trivial accent: "I was half expecting you," he added.

"No supper," said Archie. "It is impossible that I should eat."

"Not impossible," said the tall old man, laying his hand upon his shoulder, "and, if you will believe me, necessary."

"You know what brings me?" said Archie, as soon as the servant had left the room.

"I have a guess, I have a guess," replied Glenalmond. "We will talk of it presently — when Carstairs has come and gone, and you have had a piece of my good Cheddar cheese and a pull at the porter tankard: not before."

"It is impossible I should eat," repeated Archie.

"Tut, tut!" said Lord Glenalmond. "You have eaten nothing to-day, and, I venture to add, nothing yesterday. There is no case that may not be made worse; this may be a very disagreeable business, but if you were to fall sick and die, it would be still more so, and for all concerned — for all concerned."

"I see you must know all," said Archie. "Where did you hear it?"

"In the mart of scandal, in the Parliament House," said Glenalmond. "It runs riot below among the bar and the public, but it sifts up to us upon the bench, and rumour has some of her voices even in the divisions."

Carstairs returned at this moment, and rapidly laid out a little supper; during which Lord Glenalmond spoke at large and a little vaguely on indifferent subjects, so that it might be rather said of him that he made a cheerful noise, than that he contributed to human conversation; and Archie sat upon the other side, not heeding him, brooding over his wrongs and errors.

But so soon as the servant was gone, he broke forth again at once. "Who told my father? Who dared to tell him? Could it have been you?"

"No, it was not me," said the Judge; "although — to be quite frank with you, and after I had seen and warned you — it might have been me. I believe it was Glenkindie."

"That shrimp!" cried Archie.

"As you say, that shrimp," returned my lord; "although really it is scarce a fitting mode of expression for one of the Senators of the College of Justice. We were hearing the parties in a long, crucial case, before the fifteen; Creech was moving at some length for an infeftment; when I saw Glenkindie lean forward to Hermiston with his hand over his mouth and make him a secret communication. No one could have guessed its nature from your father; from Glenkindie, yes, his malice sparked out of him a little grossly. But your father, no. A man of granite. The next moment he pounced upon Creech. 'Mr. Creech,' says he, 'I'll take a look of that sasine,' and for thirty minutes after," said Glenalmond, with a smile, "Messrs. Creech and Co. were fighting a pretty uphill battle, which resulted, I need hardly add, in their total rout. The case was dismissed. No, I doubt if ever I heard Hermiston better inspired. He was literally rejoicing *in apicibus juris.*"

Archie was able to endure no longer. He thrust his plate away and interrupted the deliberate and insignificant stream of talk. "Here," he said, "I have made a fool of myself, if I have not made something worse. Do you judge between us—judge between a father and a son. I can speak to you; it is not like . . . . I will tell you what I feel and what I mean to do; and you shall be the judge," he repeated.

"I decline jurisdiction," said Glenalmond with extreme seriousness. "But, my dear boy, if it will do you any good to talk, and if it will interest you at all to hear what I may choose to say when I have heard you, I am quite at your command. Let an old man

say it, for once, and not need to blush: I love you like a son."

There came a sudden sharp sound in Archie's throat. "Ay," he cried, "and there it is! Love! Like a son! And how do you think I love my father?"

"Quietly, quietly," says my lord.

"I will be very quiet," replied Archie. "And I will be baldly frank. I do not love my father; I wonder sometimes if I do not hate him. There's my shame; perhaps my sin; at least, and in the sight of God, not my fault. How was I to love him? He has never spoken to me, never smiled upon me; I do not think he ever touched me. You know the way he talks? You do not talk so, yet you can sit and hear him without shuddering, and I cannot. My soul is sick when he begins with it; I could smite him in the mouth. And all that's nothing. I was at the trial of this Jopp. You were not there, but you must have heard him often; the man's notorious for it, for being — look at my position! he's my father and this is how I have to speak of him — notorious for being a brute and cruel and a coward. Lord Glenalmond, I give you my word, when I came out of that Court, I longed to die — the shame of it was beyond my strength: but I — I —" he rose from his seat and began to pace the room in a disorder. "Well, who am I? A boy, who have never been tried, have never done anything except this twopenny impotent folly with my father. But I tell you, my lord, and I know myself, I am at least that kind of a man — or that kind of a boy, if you prefer it — that I could die in torments rather than that anyone should suffer as that scoundrel suffered. Well, and what have I done? I

see it now. I have made a fool of myself, as I said in the beginning; and I have gone back, and asked my father's pardon, and placed myself wholly in his hands — and he has sent me to Hermiston," with a wretched smile, "for life, I suppose — and what can I say? he strikes me as having done quite right, and let me off better than I had deserved."

"My poor, dear boy!" observed Glenalmond. "My poor dear and, if you will allow me to say so, very foolish boy! You are only discovering where you are; to one of your temperament, or of mine, a painful discovery. The world was not made for us; it was made for ten hundred millions of men, all different from each other and from us; there's no royal road there, we just have to sclamber and tumble. Don't think that I am at all disposed to be surprised; don't suppose that I ever think of blaming you; indeed I rather admire! But there fall to be offered one or two observations on the case which occur to me and which (if you will listen to them dispassionately) may be the means of inducing you to view the matter more calmly. First of all, I cannot acquit you of a good deal of what is called intolerance. You seem to have been very much offended because your father talks a little sculduddery after dinner, which it is perfectly licit for him to do, and which (although I am not very fond of it myself) appears to be entirely an affair of taste. Your father, I scarcely like to remind you, since it is so trite a commonplace, is older than yourself. At least, he is *major* and *sui juris,* and may please himself in the matter of his conversation. And, do you know, I wonder if he might not have as good an answer against you and me? We say we

sometimes find him coarse, but I suspect he might retort that he finds us always dull. Perhaps a relevant exception."

He beamed on Archie, but no smile could be elicited.

"'And now," proceeded the Judge, "for 'Archibald on Capital Punishment.' This is a very plausible academic opinion; of course I do not and I cannot hold it; but that's not to say that many able and excellent persons have not done so in the past. Possibly, in the past also, I may have a little dipped myself in the same heresy. My third client, or possibly my fourth, was the means of a return in my opinions. I never saw the man I more believed in; I would have put my hand in the fire, I would have gone to the cross for him; and when it came to trial he was gradually pictured before me, by undeniable probation, in the light of so gross, so cold-blooded, and so black-hearted a villain, that I had a mind to have cast my brief upon the table. I was then boiling against the man with even a more tropical temperature than I had been boiling for him. But I said to myself: 'No, you have taken up his case; and because you have changed your mind it must not be suffered to let drop. All that rich tide of eloquence that you prepared last night with so much enthusiasm is out of place, and yet you must not desert him, you must say something.' So I said something, and I got him off. It made my reputation. But an experience of that kind is formative. A man must not bring his passions to the bar — or to the bench."

This story had slightly rekindled Archie's interest. "I could never deny," he began — "I mean I can con-

ceive that some men would be better dead. But who are we to know all the springs of God's unfortunate creatures? Who are we to trust ourselves where it seems that God himself must think twice before He treads, and to do it with delight? Yes, with delight. *Tigris ut aspera.*"

"Perhaps not a pleasant spectacle," said Glenalmond. "And yet, do you know, I think somehow a great one."

"I've had a long talk with him to-night," said Archie.

"I was supposing so," said Glenalmond.

"And he struck me —— I cannot deny that he struck me as something very big," pursued the son. "Yes, he is big. He never spoke about himself; only about me. I suppose I admired him. The dreadful part ——"

"Suppose we did not talk about that," interrupted Glenalmond. "You know it very well, it cannot in any way help that you should brood upon it, and I sometimes wonder whether you and I — who are a pair of sentimentalists — are quite good judges of plain men."

"How do you mean?" asked Archie.

"*Fair* judges, I mean," replied Glenalmond. "Can we be just to them? Do we not ask too much? There was a word of yours just now that impressed me a little when you asked me who we were to know all the springs of God's unfortunate creatures. You applied that, as I understood, to capital cases only. But does it — I ask myself — does it not apply all through? Is it any less difficult to judge of a good man or of a half-good man, than of the worst criminal at the bar? And may not each have relevant excuses?"

"Ah, but we do not talk of punishing the good, cried Archie.

"No, we do not talk of it," said Glenalmond. "But I think we do it. Your father, for instance."

"You think I have punished him?" cried Archie.

Lord Glenalmond bowed his head.

"I think I have," said Archie. "And the worst is, I think he feels it! How much, who can tell, with such a being? But I think he does."

"And I am sure of it," said Glenalmond.

"Has he spoken to you, then?" cried Archie.

"Oh, no," replied the Judge.

"I tell you honestly," said Archie, "I want to make it up to him. I will go, I have already pledged myself to go, to Hermiston. That was to him. And now I pledge myself to you, in the sight of God, that I will close my mouth on capital punishment and all other subjects where our views may clash, for — how long shall I say? when shall I have sense enough? — ten years. Is that well?"

"It is well," said my lord.

"As far as it goes," said Archie. "It is enough as regards myself, it is to lay down enough of my conceit. But as regards him, whom I have publicly insulted? What am I to do to him? How do you pay attentions to a — an Alp like that?"

"Only in one way," replied Glenalmond. "Only by obedience, punctual, prompt, and scrupulous."

"And I promise that he shall have it," answered Archie. "I offer you my hand in pledge of it."

"And I take your hand as a solemnity," replied the Judge. "God bless you, my dear, and enable you to

keep your promise. God guide you in the true way, and spare your days, and preserve to you your honest heart." At that, he kissed the young man upon the forehead in a gracious, distant, antiquated way; and instantly launched, with a marked change of voice, into another subject. "And now, let us replenish the tankard; and I believe, if you will try my Cheddar again, you would find you had a better appetite. The Court has spoken, and the case is dismissed."

"No, there is one thing I must say," cried Archie. "I must say it in justice to himself. I know — I believe faithfully, slavishly, after our talk — he will never ask me anything unjust. I am proud to feel it, that we have that much in common, I am proud to say it to you."

The Judge, with shining eyes, raised his tankard. "And I think perhaps that we might permit ourselves a toast," said he. "I should like to propose the health of a man very different from me and very much my superior — a man from whom I have often differed, who has often (in the trivial expression) rubbed me the wrong way, but whom I have never ceased to respect and, I may add, to be not a little afraid of. Shall I give you his name?"

"The Lord Justice-Clerk, Lord Hermiston," said Archie, almost with gaiety; and the pair drank the toast deeply.

It was not precisely easy to re-establish, after these emotional passages, the natural flow of conversation. But the Judge eked out what was wanting with kind looks, produced his snuff-box (which was very rarely seen) to fill in a pause, and at last, despairing of any fur-

ther social success, was upon the point of getting down a book to read a favourite passage, when there came a rather startling summons at the front door, and Carstairs ushered in my Lord Glenkindie, hot from a midnight supper. I am not aware that Glenkindie was ever a beautiful object, being short, and gross-bodied, and with an expression of sensuality comparable to a bear's. At that moment, coming in hissing from many potations, with a flushed countenance and blurred eyes, he was strikingly contrasted with the tall, pale, kingly figure of Glenalmond. A rush of confused thought came over Archie — of shame that this was one of his father's elect friends; of pride, that at the least of it Hermiston could carry his liquor; and last of all, of rage, that he should have here under his eye the man that had betrayed him. And then that too passed away; and he sat quiet, biding his opportunity.

The tipsy senator plunged at once into an explanation with Glenalmond. There was a point reserved yesterday, he had been able to make neither head nor tail of it, and seeing lights in the house, he had just dropped in for a glass of porter — and at this point he became aware of the third person. Archie saw the cod's mouth and the blunt lips of Glenkindie gape at him for a moment, and the recognition twinkle in his eyes.

"Who's this?" said he. "What? is this possibly you, Don Quickshot? And how are ye? And how's your father? And what's all this we hear of you? It seems you're a most extraordinary leveller, by all tales. No king, no parliaments, and your gorge rises at the macers, worthy men! Hoot, too! Dear, dear me! Your father's son too! Most rideekulous!"

Archie was on his feet, flushing a little at the reappearance of his unhappy figure of speech, but perfectly self-possessed. "My lord — and you, Lord Glenalmond, my dear friend," he began, "this is a happy chance for me, that I can make my confession and offer my apologies to two of you at once."

"Ah, but I don't know about that. Confession? It'll be judeecial, my young friend," cried the jocular Glenkindie. "And I'm afraid to listen to ye. Think if ye were to make me a coanvert!"

"If you would allow me, my lord," returned Archie, "what I have to say is very serious to me; and be pleased to be humorous after I am gone."

"Remember, I'll hear nothing against the macers!" put in the incorrigible Glenkindie.

But Archie continued as though he had not spoken. "I have played, both yesterday and to-day, a part for which I can only offer the excuse of youth. I was so unwise as to go to an execution; it seems, I made a scene at the gallows; not content with which, I spoke the same night in a college society against capital punishment. This is the extent of what I have done, and in case you hear more alleged against me, I protest my innocence. I have expressed my regret already to my father, who is so good as to pass my conduct over — in a degree, and upon the condition that I am to leave my law studies." . . .

CHAPTER V

WINTER ON THE MOORS

I. AT HERMISTON

THE road to Hermiston runs for a great part of the way up the valley of a stream, a favourite with anglers and with midges, full of falls and pools, and shaded by willows and natural woods of birch. Here and there, but at great distances, a byway branches off, and a gaunt farmhouse may be descried above in a fold of the hill; but the more part of the time, the road would be quite empty of passage and the hills of habitation. Hermiston parish is one of the least populous in Scotland; and, by the time you came that length, you would scarce be surprised at the inimitable smallness of the kirk, a dwarfish, ancient place seated for fifty, and standing in a green by the burn-side among two-score grave-stones. The manse close by, although no more than a cottage, is surrounded by the brightness of a flower-garden and the straw roofs of bees; and the whole colony, kirk and manse, garden and graveyard, finds harbourage in a grove of rowans, and is all the year round in a great silence broken only by the drone of the bees, the tinkle of the burn, and the bell on Sundays. A mile beyond the kirk the road leaves the valley by a

precipitous ascent, and brings you a little after to the place of Hermiston, where it comes to an end in the back-yard before the coach-house. All beyond and about is the great field of the hills; the plover, the curlew, and the lark cry there; the wind blows as it blows in a ship's rigging, hard and cold and pure; and the hill-tops huddle one behind another like a herd of cattle into the sunset.

The house was sixty years old, unsightly, comfortable; a farmyard and a kitchen garden on the left, with a fruit wall where little hard green pears came to their maturity about the end of October.

The policy (as who should say the park) was of some extent, but very ill reclaimed; heather and moorfowl had crossed the boundary wall and spread and roosted within; and it would have tasked a landscape gardener to say where policy ended and unpolicied nature began. My lord had been led by the influence of Mr. Sheriff Scott into a considerable design of planting; many acres were accordingly set out with fir, and the little feathery besoms gave a false scale and lent a strange air of a toy-shop to the moors. A great, rooty sweetness of bogs was in the air, and at all seasons an infinite melancholy piping of hill birds. Standing so high and with so little shelter, it was a cold, exposed house, splashed by showers, drenched by continuous rains that made the gutters to spout, beaten upon and buffeted by all the winds of heaven; and the prospect would be often black with tempest, and often white with the snows of winter. But the house was wind and weather proof, the hearths were kept bright, and the rooms pleasant with live fires of peat; and Archie might sit of an even-

ing and hear the squalls bugle on the moorland, and watch the fire prosper in the earthy fuel, and the smoke winding up the chimney, and drink deep of the pleasures of shelter.

Solitary as the place was, Archie did not want neighbours. Every night, if he chose, he might go down to the manse and share a "brewst" of toddy with the minister — a hare-brained ancient gentleman, long and light and still active, though his knees were loosened with age, and his voice broke continually in childish trebles — and his lady wife, a heavy, comely dame, without a word to say for herself beyond good even and good day. Harum-scarum, clodpole young lairds of the neighbourhood paid him the compliment of a visit. Young Hay of Romanes rode down to call, on his crop-eared pony; young Pringle of Drumanno came up on his bony grey. Hay remained on the hospitable field, and must be carried to bed; Pringle got somehow to his saddle about 3 a.m., and (as Archie stood with the lamp on the upper doorstep) lurched, uttered a senseless view halloa, and vanished out of the small circle of illumination like a wraith. Yet a minute or two longer the clatter of his break-neck flight was audible, then it was cut off by the intervening steepness of the hill; and again, a great while after, the renewed beating of phantom horse-hoofs, far in the valley of the Hermiston, showed that the horse at least, if not his rider, was still on the homeward way.

There was a Tuesday club at the "Crosskeys" in Crossmichael, where the young bloods of the countryside congregated and drank deep on a percentage of the expense, so that he was left gainer who should have

drunk the most. Archie had no great mind to this diversion, but he took it like a duty laid upon him, went with a decent regularity, did his manfullest with the liquor, held up his head in the local jests, and got home again and was able to put up his horse, to the admiration of Kirstie and the lass that helped her. He dined at Driffel, supped at Windielaws. He went to the new year's ball at Huntsfield and was made welcome, and thereafter rode to hounds with my Lord Muirfell, upon whose name, as that of a legitimate Lord of Parliament, in a work so full of Lords of Session, my pen should pause reverently. Yet the same fate attended him here as in Edinburgh. The habit of solitude tends to perpetuate itself, and an austerity of which he was quite unconscious, and a pride which seemed arrogance, and perhaps was chiefly shyness, discouraged and offended his new companions. Hay did not return more than twice, Pringle never at all, and there came a time when Archie even desisted from the Tuesday Club, and became in all things — what he had had the name of almost from the first — the Recluse of Hermiston. High-nosed Miss Pringle of Drumanno and high-stepping Miss Marshall of the Mains were understood to have had a difference of opinion about him the day after the ball — he was none the wiser, he could not suppose himself to be remarked by these entrancing ladies. At the ball itself my Lord Muirfell's daughter, the Lady Flora, spoke to him twice, and the second time with a touch of appeal, so that her colour rose and her voice trembled a little in his ear, like a passing grace in music. He stepped back with a heart on fire, coldly and not ungracefully excused himself, and a little after watched her

dancing with young Drumanno of the empty laugh, and was harrowed at the sight, and raged to himself that this was a world in which it was given to Drumanno to please, and to himself only to stand aside and envy. He seemed excluded, as of right, from the favour of such society — seemed to extinguish mirth wherever he came, and was quick to feel the wound, and desist, and retire into solitude. If he had but understood the figure he presented, and the impression he made on these bright eyes and tender hearts; if he had but guessed that the Recluse of Hermiston, young, graceful, well-spoken, but always cold, stirred the maidens of the county with the charm of Byronism when Byronism was new, it may be questioned whether his destiny might not even yet have been modified. It may be questioned, and I think it should be doubted. It was in his horoscope to be parsimonious of pain to himself, or of the chance of pain, even to the avoidance of any opportunity of pleasure; to have a Roman sense of duty, an instinctive aristocracy of manners and taste; to be the son of Adam Weir and Jean Rutherford.

II. KIRSTIE

Kirstie was now over fifty, and might have sat to a sculptor. Long of limb and still light of foot, deep-breasted, robust-loined, her golden hair not yet mingled with any trace of silver, the years had but caressed and embellished her. By the lines of a rich and vigorous maternity, she seemed destined to be the bride of heroes and the mother of their children; and behold, by the iniquity of fate, she had passed through her youth alone,

and drew near to the confines of age, a childless woman. The tender ambitions that she had received at birth had been, by time and disappointment, diverted into a certain barren zeal of industry and fury of interference. She carried her thwarted ardours into housework, she washed floors with her empty heart. If she could not win the love of one with love, she must dominate all by her temper. Hasty, wordy, and wrathful, she had a drawn quarrel with most of her neighbours, and with the others not much more than armed neutrality. The grieve's wife had been "sneisty;" the sister of the gardener, who kept house for him, had shown herself "upsitten;" and she wrote to Lord Hermiston about once a year demanding the discharge of the offenders, and justifying the demand by much wealth of detail. For it must not be supposed that the quarrel rested with the wife and did not take in the husband also — or with the gardener's sister, and did not speedily include the gardener himself. As the upshot of all this petty quarrelling and intemperate speech, she was practically excluded (like a lightkeeper on his tower) from the comforts of human association; except with her own indoor drudge, who, being but a lassie and entirely at her mercy, must submit to the shifty weather of "the mistress's" moods without complaint, and be willing to take buffets or caresses according to the temper of the hour. To Kirstie, thus situate and in the Indian summer of her heart, which was slow to submit to age, the gods sent this equivocal good thing of Archie's presence. She had known him in the cradle and paddled him when he misbehaved; and yet, as she had not so much as set eyes on him since he was eleven

and had his last serious illness, the tall, slender, refined, and rather melancholy young gentleman of twenty came upon her with the shock of a new acquaintance. He was "Young Hermiston," "the laird himsel';" he had an air of distinctive superiority, a cold straight glance of his black eyes, that abashed the woman's tantrums in the beginning, and therefore the possibility of any quarrel was excluded. He was new, and therefore immediately aroused her curiosity; he was reticent, and kept it awake. And lastly he was dark and she fair, and he was male and she female, the everlasting fountains of interest.

Her feeling partook of the loyalty of a clanswoman, the hero-worship of a maiden aunt, and the idolatry due to a god. No matter what he had asked of her, ridiculous or tragic, she would have done it and joyed to do it. Her passion, for it was nothing less, entirely filled her. It was a rich physical pleasure to make his bed or light his lamp for him when he was absent, to pull off his wet boots or wait on him at dinner when he returned. A young man who should have so doted on the idea, moral and physical, of any woman, might be properly described as being in love, head and heels, and would have behaved himself accordingly. But Kirstie — though her heart leaped at his coming footsteps — though, when he patted her shoulder, her face brightened for the day — had not a hope or thought beyond the present moment and its perpetuation to the end of time. Till the end of time she would have had nothing altered, but still continue delightedly to serve her idol, and be repaid (say twice in the month) with a clap on the shoulder.

I have said her heart leaped — it is the accepted phrase. But rather, when she was alone in any chamber of the house, and heard his foot passing on the corridors, something in her bosom rose slowly until her breath was suspended, and as slowly fell again with a deep sigh, when the steps had passed and she was disappointed of her eyes' desire. This perpetual hunger and thirst of his presence kept her all day on the alert. When he went forth at morning, she would stand and follow him with admiring looks. As it grew late and drew to the time of his return, she would steal forth to a corner of the policy wall and be seen standing there sometimes by the hour together, gazing with shaded eyes, waiting the exquisite and barren pleasure of his view a mile off on the mountains. When at night she had trimmed and gathered the fire, turned down his bed, and laid out his night-gear — when there was no more to be done for the king's pleasure, but to remember him fervently in her usually very tepid prayers, and go to bed brooding upon his perfections, his future career, and what she should give him the next day for dinner — there still remained before her one more opportunity; she was still to take in the tray and say good-night. Sometimes Archie would glance up from his book with a pre-occupied nod and a perfunctory salutation which was in truth a dismissal; sometimes — and by degrees more often — the volume would be laid aside, he would meet her coming with a look of relief; and the conversation would be engaged, last out the supper, and be prolonged till the small hours by the waning fire. It was no wonder that Archie was fond of company after his solitary days; and Kirstie, upon

her side, exerted all the arts of her vigorous nature to ensnare his attention. She would keep back some piece of news during dinner to be fired off with the entrance of the supper tray, and form as it were the *lever de rideau* of the evening's entertainment. Once he had heard her tongue wag, she made sure of the result. From one subject to another she moved by insidious transitions, fearing the least silence, fearing almost to give him time for an answer lest it should slip into a hint of separation. Like so many people of her class, she was a brave narrator; her place was on the hearth-rug and she made it a rostrum, miming her stories as she told them, fitting them with vital detail, spinning them out with endless "quo' he's" and "quo' she's," her voice sinking into a whisper over the supernatural or the horrific; until she would suddenly spring up in affected surprise, and pointing to the clock, "Mercy, Mr. Archie!" she would say, "Whatten a time o' night is this of it! God forgive me for a daft wife!" So it befell, by good management, that she was not only the first to begin these nocturnal conversations, but invariably the first to break them off; so she managed to retire and not to be dismissed.

III. A BORDER FAMILY

Such an unequal intimacy has never been uncommon in Scotland, where the clan spirit survives; where the servant tends to spend her life in the same service, a helpmeet at first, then a tyrant, and at last a pensioner; where, besides, she is not necessarily destitute of the pride of birth, but is, perhaps, like

Kirstie, a connection of her master's, and at least knows the legend of her own family, and may count kinship with some illustrious dead. For that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forbears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation. No more characteristic instance could be found than in the family of Kirstie Elliott. They were all, and Kirstie the first of all, ready and eager to pour forth the particulars of their genealogy, embellished with every detail that memory had handed down or fancy fabricated; and, behold! from every ramification of that tree there dangled a halter. The Elliotts themselves have had a chequered history; but these Elliotts deduced, besides, from three of the most unfortunate of the border clans — the Nicksons, the Ellwalds, and the Crozers. One ancestor after another might be seen appearing a moment out of the rain and the hill mist upon his furtive business, speeding home, perhaps, with a paltry booty of lame horses and lean kine, or squealing and dealing death in some moorland feud of the ferrets and the wildcats. One after another closed his obscure adventures in mid-air, triced up to the arm of the royal gibbet or the Baron's dule-tree. For the rusty blunderbuss of Scots criminal justice, which usually hurts nobody but jurymen, became a weapon of precision for the Nicksons, the Ellwalds, and the Crozers. The exhilaration of their exploits seemed to haunt the memories of their descendants alone, and the shame to be forgotten. Pride glowed in their bosoms to publish

their relationship to "Andrew Ellwald of the Laverockstanes, called 'Unchancy Dand,' who was justifeed wi' seeven mair of the same name at Jeddart in the days of King James the Sax." In all this tissue of crime and misfortune, the Elliotts of Cauldstaneslap had one boast which must appear legitimate: the males were gallows-birds, born outlaws, petty thieves, and deadly brawlers; but according to the same tradition, the females were all chaste and faithful. The power of ancestry on the character is not limited to the inheritance of cells. If I buy ancestors by the gross from the benevolence of Lion King at Arms, my grandson (if he is Scottish) will feel a quickening emulation of their deeds. The men of the Elliotts were proud, lawless, violent as of right, cherishing and prolonging a tradition. In like manner with the women. And the woman, essentially passionate and reckless, who crouched on the rug, in the shine of the peat fire, telling these tales, had cherished through life a wild integrity of virtue.

Her father Gilbert had been deeply pious, a savage disciplinarian in the antique style, and withal a notorious smuggler. "I mind when I was a bairn getting mony a skelp and being shoo'd to bed like pou'try," she would say. "That would be when the lads and their bit kegs were on the road. We've had the riffraff of two-three counties in our kitchen, mony's the time, betwix' the twelve and the three; and their lanterns would be standing in the forecourt, ay, a score o' them at once. But there was nae ungodly talk permitted at Cauldstaneslap; my faither was a consistent man in walk and conversation; just let slip an aith, and there was the door to ye! He had that zeal for the Lord, it

was a fair wonder to hear him pray, but the faimily has aye had a gift that way." This father was twice married, once to a dark woman of the old Ellwald stock, by whom he had Gilbert, presently of Cauldstaneslap; and, secondly, to the mother of Kirstie. "He was an auld man when he married her, a fell auld man wi' a muckle voice — you could hear him rowting from the top o' the kye-stairs," she said; "but for her, it appears, she was a perfit wonder. It was gentle blood she had, Mr. Archie, for it was your ain. The countryside gaed gyte about her and her gowden hair. Mines is no to be mentioned wi' it, and there's few weemen has mair hair than what I have, or yet a bonnier colour. Often would I tell my dear Miss Jeannie — that was your mother, dear, she was cruel ta'en up about her hair, it was unco tender, ye see — 'Houts, Miss Jeannie,' I would say, 'just fling your washes and your French dentifrishes in the back o' the fire, for that's the place for them; and awa' down to a burn-side, and wash yersel in cauld hill water, and dry your bonny hair in the caller wind o' the muirs, the way that my mother aye washed hers, and that I have aye made it a practice to have washen mines — just you do what I tell ye, my dear, and ye'll give me news of it! Ye'll have hair, and routh of hair, a pigtail as thick's my arm,' I said, 'and the bonniest colour like the clear gowden guineas, so as the lads in kirk'll no can keep their eyes off it!' Weel, it lasted out her time, puir thing! I cuttit a lock of it upon her corp that was lying there sae cauld. I'll show it ye some of thir days if ye're good. But, as I was sayin', my mither ——"

On the death of the father there remained golden-

haired Kirstie, who took service with her distant kinsfolk, the Rutherfords, and black-a-vised Gilbert, twenty years older, who farmed the Cauldstaneslap, married, and begot four sons between 1773 and 1784, and a daughter, like a postscript, in '97, the year of Camperdown and Cape St. Vincent. It seemed it was a tradition of the family to wind up with a belated girl. In 1804, at the age of sixty, Gilbert met an end that might be called heroic. He was due home from market any time from eight at night till five in the morning, and in any condition from the quarrelsome to the speechless, for he maintained to that age the goodly customs of the Scots farmer. It was known on this occasion that he had a good bit of money to bring home; the word had gone round loosely. The laird had shown his guineas, and if anybody had but noticed it, there was an ill-looking, vagabond crew, the scum of Edinburgh, that drew out of the market long ere it was dusk and took the hill-road by Hermiston, where it was not to be believed that they had lawful business. One of the country-side, one Dickieson, they took with them to be their guide, and dear he paid for it! Of a sudden, in the ford of the Broken Dykes, this vermin clan fell on the laird, six to one, and him three parts asleep, having drunk hard. But it is ill to catch an Elliott. For awhile, in the night and the black water that was deep as to his saddle-girths, he wrought with his staff like a smith at his stithy, and great was the sound of oaths and blows. With that the ambuscade was burst, and he rode for home with a pistol-ball in him, three knife-wounds, the loss of his front teeth, a broken rib and bridle, and a dying horse. That was a race with death that the

laird rode! In the mirk night, with his broken bridle and his head swimming, he dug his spurs to the rowels in the horse's side, and the horse, that was even worse off than himself, the poor creature! screamed out loud like a person as he went, so that the hills echoed with it, and the folks at Cauldstaneslap got to their feet about the table and looked at each other with white faces. The horse fell dead at the yard gate, the laird won the length of the house and fell there on the threshold. To the son that raised him he gave the bag of money. "Hae," said he. All the way up the thieves had seemed to him to be at his heels, but now the hallucination left him — he saw them again in the place of the ambuscade — and the thirst of vengeance seized on his dying mind. Raising himself and pointing with an imperious finger into the black night from which he had come, he uttered the single command, "Brocken Dykes," and fainted. He had never been loved, but he had been feared in honour. At that sight, at that word, gasped out at them from a toothless and bleeding mouth, the old Elliott spirit awoke with a shout in the four sons. "Wanting the hat," continues my author, Kirstie, whom I but haltingly follow, for she told this tale like one inspired, "wanting guns, for there wasnae twa grains o' pouder in the house, wi' nae mair weepons than their sticks into their hands, the fower o' them took the road. Only Hob, and that was the eldest, hunkered at the door-sill where the blood had rin, fyled his hand wi' it, and haddit it up to Heeven in the way o' the auld Border aith. 'Hell shall have her ain again this nicht!' he raired, and rode forth upon his errand." It was three miles to Broken Dykes, down hill, and a

sore road. Kirstie has seen men from Edinburgh dismounting there in plain day to lead their horses. But the four brothers rode it as if Auld Hornie were behind and Heaven in front. Come to the ford, and there was Dickieson. By all tales, he was not dead, but breathed and reared upon his elbow, and cried out to them for help. It was at a graceless face that he asked mercy. As soon as Hob saw, by the glint of the lantern, the eyes shining and the whiteness of the teeth in the man's face, "Damn you!" says he; "ye hae your teeth, hae ye?" and rode his horse to and fro upon that human remnant. Beyond that, Dandie must dismount with the lantern to be their guide; he was the youngest son, scarce twenty at the time. "A' nicht long they gaed in the wet heath and jennipers, and whaur they gaed they neither knew nor cared, but just followed the bluidstains and the footprints o' their faither's murderers. And a' nicht Dandie had his nose to the grund like a tyke, and the ithers followed and spak' naething, neither black nor white. There was nae noise to be heard, but just the sough of the swalled burns, and Hob, the dour yin, risping his teeth as he gaed." With the first glint of the morning they saw they were on the drove road, and at that the four stopped and had a dram to their breakfasts, for they knew that Dand must have guided them right, and the rogues could be but little ahead, hot foot for Edinburgh by the way of the Pentland Hills. By eight o'clock they had word of them — a shepherd had seen four men "uncoly mishandled" go by in the last hour. "That's yin a piece," says Clem, and swung his cudgel. "Five o' them!" says Hob. "God's death, but the faither was a man! And him

drunk!" And then there befell them what my author termed "a sair misbegowk," for they were overtaken by a posse of mounted neighbours come to aid in the pursuit. Four sour faces looked on the reinforcement. 'The deil's broughten you!" said Clem, and they rode thenceforward in the rear of the party with hanging heads. Before ten they had found and secured the rogues, and by three of the afternoon, as they rode up the Vennel with their prisoners, they were aware of a concourse of people bearing in their midst something that dripped. "For the boady of the saxt," pursued Kirstie, "wi' his head smashed like a hazelnit, had been a' that nicht in the chairge o' Hermiston Water, and it dunting it on the stanes, and grunding it on the shallows, and flinging the deid thing heels-ower-hurdie at the Fa's o' Spango; and in the first o' the day Tweed had got a hold o' him and carried him off like a wind, for it was uncoly swalled and raced wi' him, bobbing under braesides, and was long playing with the creature in the drumlie lynns under the castle, and at the hinder end of all cuist him up on the starling of Crossmichael brig. Sae there they were a' thegither at last (for Dickieson had been brought in on a cart long syne), and folk could see what mainner o' man my brither had been that had held his head again sax and saved the siller, and him drunk!" Thus died of honourable injuries and in the savour of fame Gilbert Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap; but his sons had scarce less glory out of the business. Their savage haste, the skill with which Dand had found and followed the trail, the barbarity to the wounded Dickieson (which was like an open secret in the county) and the doom which it was

currently supposed they had intended for the others, struck and stirred popular imagination. Some century earlier the last of the minstrels might have fashioned the last of the ballads out of that Homeric fight and chase; but the spirit was dead, or had been reincarnated already in Mr. Sheriff Scott, and the degenerate moorsmen must be content to tell the tale in prose and to make of the "Four Black Brothers" a unit after the fashion of the "Twelve Apostles" or the "Three Musketeers."

Robert, Gilbert, Clement, and Andrew — in the proper Border diminutive, Hob, Gib, Clem, and Dand Elliott — these ballad heroes had much in common; in particular, their high sense of the family and the family honour; but they went diverse ways, and prospered and failed in different businesses. According to Kirstie, "they had a' bees in their bonnets but Hob." Hob the laird was, indeed, essentially a decent man. An elder of the Kirk, nobody had heard an oath upon his lips, save, perhaps, thrice or so at the sheep-washing, since the chase of his father's murderers. The figure he had shown on that eventful night disappeared as if swallowed by a trap. He who had ecstatically dipped his hand in the red blood, he who had ridden down Dickieson, became, from that moment on, a stiff and rather graceless model of the rustic proprieties; cannily profiting by the high war prices, and yearly stowing away a little nest-egg in the bank against calamity; approved of and sometimes consulted by the greater lairds for the massive and placid sense of what he said, when he could be induced to say anything; and particularly valued by the minister, Mr. Torrance, as a righthand man in the parish, and a model to parents. The trans-

figuration had been for the moment only; some Barbarossa, some old Adam of our ancestors, sleeps in all of us till the fit circumstance shall call it into action; and for as sober as he now seemed, Hob had given once for all the measure of the devil that haunted him. He was married, and, by reason of the effulgence of that legendary night, was adored by his wife. He had a mob of little lusty, barefoot children who marched in a caravan the long miles to school, the stages of whose pilgrimage were marked by acts of spoliation and mischief, and who were qualified in the country-side as "fair pests." But in the house, if "faither was in," they were quiet as mice. In short, Hob moved through life in a great peace — the reward of anyone who shall have killed his man, with any formidable and figurative circumstance, in the midst of a country gagged and swaddled with civilisation.

It was a current remark that the Elliotts were "guid and bad, like sanguishes"; and certainly there was a curious distinction, the men of business coming alternately with the dreamers. The second brother, Gib, was a weaver by trade, had gone out early into the world to Edinburgh, and come home again with his wings singed. There was an exaltation in his nature which had led him to embrace with enthusiasm the principles of the French Revolution, and had ended by bringing him under the hawse of my Lord Hermiston in that furious onslaught of his upon the Liberals, which sent Muir and Palmer into exile and dashed the party into chaff. It was whispered that my lord, in his great scorn for the movement, and prevailed upon a little by a sense of neighbourliness, had given Gib a hint. Meet-

ing him one day in the Potterrow, my lord had stopped in front of him. "Gib, ye eediot," he had said, "what's this I hear of you? Poalitics, poalitics, poalitics, weaver's poalitics, is the way of it, I hear. If ye arenae a' thegether dozened with eediocy, ye'll gang your ways back to Cauldstaneslap, and ca' your loom, and ca' your loom, man!" And Gilbert had taken him at the word and returned, with an expedition almost to be called flight, to the house of his father. The clearest of his inheritance was that family gift of prayer of which Kirstie had boasted; and the baffled politician now turned his attention to religious matters — or, as others said, to heresy and schism. Every Sunday morning he was in Crossmichael, where he had gathered together, one by one, a sect of about a dozen persons, who called themselves "God's Remnant of the True Faithful," or, for short, "God's Remnant." To the profane, they were known as "Gib's Deils." Baillie Sweedie, a noted humorist in the town, vowed that the proceedings always opened to the tune of "The Deil Fly Away with the Exciseman," and that the sacrament was dispensed in the form of hot whisky toddy; both wicked hits at the evangelist, who had been suspected of smuggling in his youth, and had been overtaken (as the phrase went) on the streets of Crossmichael one Fair day. It was known that every Sunday they prayed for a blessing on the arms of Bonaparte. For this, "God's Remnant," as they were "skailing" from the cottage that did duty for a temple, had been repeatedly stoned by the bairns, and Gib himself hooted by a squadron of Border volunteers in which his own brother, Dand, rode in a uniform and with a drawn sword. The "Remnant"

were believed, besides, to be "antinomian in principle," which might otherwise have been a serious charge, but the way public opinion then blew it was quite swallowed up and forgotten in the scandal about Bonaparte. For the rest, Gilbert had set up his loom in an outhouse at Cauldstaneslap, where he laboured assiduously six days of the week. His brothers, appalled by his political opinions and willing to avoid dissension in the household, spoke but little to him; he less to them, remaining absorbed in the study of the Bible and almost constant prayer. The gaunt weaver was dry-nurse at Cauldstaneslap, and the bairns loved him dearly. Except when he was carrying an infant in his arms, he was rarely seen to smile — as, indeed, there were few smilers in that family. When his sister-in-law rallied him, and proposed that he should get a wife and bairns of his own, since he was so fond of them, "I have no clearness of mind upon that point," he would reply. If nobody called him in to dinner, he stayed out. Mrs. Hob, a hard, unsympathetic woman, once tried the experiment. He went without food all day, but at dusk, as the light began to fail him, he came into the house of his own accord, looking puzzled. "I've had a great gale of prayer upon my speerit," said he. "I canna mind sae muckle's what I had for denner." The creed of God's Remnant was justified in the life of its founder. "And yet I dinna ken," said Kirstie. "He's maybe no more stockfish than his neeghbours! He rode wi' the rest o' them, and had a good stamach to the work, by a' that I hear! God's Remnant! The deil's clavers! There wasna muckle Christianity in the way Hob guided Johnny Dickieson, at the least of it; but Guid kens! Is

he a Christian even? He might be a Mahommedan or a Deevil or a Fireworshipper, for what I ken."

The third brother had his name on a door-plate, no less, in the city of Glasgow. "Mr. Clement Elliott," as long as your arm. In his case, that spirit of innovation which had shown itself timidly in the case of Hob by the admission of new manures, and which had run to waste with Gilbert in subversive politics and heretical religions, bore useful fruit in many ingenious mechanical improvements. In boyhood, from his addiction to strange devices of sticks and string, he had been counted the most eccentric of the family. But that was all by now, and he was a partner of his firm, and looked to die a baillie. He too had married, and was rearing a plentiful family in the smoke and din of Glasgow; he was wealthy, and could have bought out his brother, the cock-laird, six times over, it was whispered; and when he slipped away to Cauldstaneslap for a well-earned holiday, which he did as often as he was able, he astonished the neighbours with his broadcloth, his beaver hat, and the ample plies of his neck-cloth. Though an eminently solid man at bottom, after the pattern of Hob, he had contracted a certain Glasgow briskness and *aplomb* which set him off. All the other Elliotts were as lean as a rake, but Clement was laying on fat, and he panted sorely when he must get into his boots. Dand said, chuckling: "Ay, Clem has the elements of a corporation." "A provost and corporation," returned Clem. And his readiness was much admired.

The fourth brother, Dand, was a shepherd to his trade, and by starts, when he could bring his mind to it, excelled in the business. Nobody could train a dog

like Dandie; nobody, through the peril of great storms in the winter time, could do more gallantly. But if his dexterity were exquisite, his diligence was but fitful; and he served his brother for bed and board, and a trifle of pocket-money when he asked for it. He loved money well enough, knew very well how to spend it, and could make a shrewd bargain when he liked. But he preferred a vague knowledge that he was well to windward to any counted coins in the pocket; he felt himself richer so. Hob would expostulate: "I'm an amature herd," Dand would reply: "I'll keep your sheep to you when I'm so minded, but I'll keep my liberty too. Thir's no man can coandescend on what I'm worth." Clem would expound to him the miraculous results of compound interest, and recommend investments. "Ay, man?" Dand would say, "and do you think, if I took Hob's siller, that I wouldna drink it or wear it on the lassies? And, anyway, my kingdom is no of this world. Either I'm a poet or else I'm nothing." Clem would remind him of old age. "I'll die young, like Robbie Burns," he would say stoutly. No question but he had a certain accomplishment in minor verse. His "Hermiston Burn," with its pretty refrain —

> I love to gang thinking whaur ye gang linking,
> Hermiston burn, in the howe;

his "Auld, auld Elliotts, clay-cauld Elliotts, dour, bauld Elliotts of auld," and his really fascinating piece about the Praying Weaver's Stone, had gained him in the neighbourhood the reputation, still possible in Scotland, of a local bard; and, though not printed himself, he was recognized by others who were and who had become famous.

Walter Scott owed to Dandie the text of the "Raid of Wearie" in the *Minstrelsy* and made him welcome at his house, and appreciated his talents, such as they were, with all his usual generosity. The Ettrick Shepherd was his sworn crony; they would meet, drink to excess, roar out their lyrics in each other's faces, and quarrel and make it up again till bedtime. And besides these recognitions, almost to be called official, Dandie was made welcome for the sake of his gift through the farmhouses of several contiguous dales, and was thus exposed to manifold temptations which he rather sought than fled. He had figured on the stool of repentance, for once fulfilling to the letter the tradition of his hero and model. His humorous verses to Mr. Torrance on that occasion — "Kenspeckle here my lane I stand" — unfortunately too indelicate for further citation, ran through the country like a fiery cross; they were recited, quoted, paraphrased and laughed over as far away as Dumfries on the one hand and Dunbar on the other.

These four brothers were united by a close bond, the bond of that mutual admiration — or rather mutual hero-worship — which is so strong among the members of secluded families who have much ability and little culture. Even the extremes admired each other. Hob, who had as much poetry as the tongs, professed to find pleasure in Dand's verses; Clem, who had no more religion than Claverhouse, nourished a heartfelt, at least an open-mouthed, admiration of Gib's prayers; and Dandie followed with relish the rise of Clem's fortunes. Indulgence followed hard on the heels of admiration. The laird, Clem and Dand, who were Tories and patriots of the hottest quality, excused to themselves, with

a certain bashfulness, the radical and revolutionary heresies of Gib. By another division of the family, the laird, Clem, and Gib, who were men exactly virtuous, swallowed the dose of Dand's irregularities as a kind of clog or drawback in the mysterious providence of God affixed to bards, and distinctly probative of poetical genius. To appreciate the simplicity of their mutual admiration, it was necessary to hear Clem, arrived upon one of his visits, and dealing in a spirit of continuous irony with the affairs and personalities of that great city of Glasgow where he lived and transacted business. The various personages, ministers of the church, municipal officers, mercantile big-wigs, whom he had occasion to introduce, were all alike denigrated, all served but as reflectors to cast back a flattering side-light on the house of Cauldstaneslap. The Provost, for whom Clem by exception entertained a measure of respect, he would liken to Hob. "He minds me o' the laird there," he would say. "He has some of Hob's grand, whun-stane sense, and the same way with him of steiking his mouth when he's no very pleased." And Hob, all unconscious, would draw down his upper lip and produce, as if for comparison, the formidable grimace referred to. The unsatisfactory incumbent of St. Enoch's Kirk was thus briefly dismissed: "If he had but twa fingers o' Gib's he would waken them up." And Gib, honest man! would look down and secretly smile. Clem was a spy whom they had sent out into the world of men. He had come back with the good news that there was nobody to compare with the Four Black Brothers, no position that they would not adorn, no official that it would not be well they should replace,

no interest of mankind, secular or spiritual, which would not immediately bloom under their supervision. The excuse of their folly is in two words: scarce the breadth of a hair divided them from the peasantry. The measure of their sense is this: that these symposia of rustic vanity were kept entirely within the family, like some secret ancestral practice. To the world their serious faces were never deformed by the suspicion of any simper of self-contentment. Yet it was known. "They hae a guid pride o' themsel's!" was the word in the country-side.

Lastly, in a Border story, there should be added their "two-names." Hob was The Laird. "Roy ne puis, prince ne daigne"; he was the laird of Cauldstaneslap—say fifty acres—*ipsissimus*. Clement was Mr. Elliott, as upon his door-plate, the earlier Dafty having been discarded as no longer applicable, and indeed only a reminder of misjudgment and the imbecility of the public; and the youngest, in honour of his perpetual wanderings, was known by the sobriquet of Randy Dand.

It will be understood that not all this information was communicated by the aunt, who had too much of the family failing herself to appreciate it thoroughly in others. But as time went on, Archie began to observe an omission in the family chronicle.

"Is there not a girl too?" he asked.

"Ay. Kirstie. She was named from me, or my grandmother at least—it's the same thing," returned the aunt, and went on again about Dand, whom she secretly preferred by reason of his gallantries.

"But what is your niece like?" said Archie at the next opportunity.

"Her? As black's your hat! But I dinna suppose she would maybe be what you would ca' *ill-looked* a' thegither. Na, she's a kind of a handsome jaud — a kind o' gipsy," said the aunt, who had two sets of scales for men and women — or perhaps it would be more fair to say that she had three, and the third and the most loaded was for girls.

"How comes it that I never see her in church?" said Archie.

"'Deed, and I believe she's in Glesgie with Clem and his wife. A heap good she's like to get of it! I dinna say for men folk, but where weemen folk are born, there let them bide. Glory to God, I was never far'er from here than Crossmichael."

In the meantime it began to strike Archie as strange, that while she thus sang the praises of her kinsfolk, and manifestly relished their virtues and (I may say) their vices like a thing creditable to herself, there should appear not the least sign of cordiality between the house of Hermiston and that of Cauldstaneslap. Going to church of a Sunday, as the lady housekeeper stepped with her skirts kilted, three tucks of her white petticoat showing below, and her best India shawl upon her back (if the day were fine) in a pattern of radiant dyes, she would sometimes overtake her relatives preceding her more leisurely in the same direction. Gib of course was absent: by skriegh of day he had been gone to Crossmichael and his fellow heretics; but the rest of the family would be seen marching in open order: Hob and Dand, stiff-necked, straight-backed six-footers, with severe dark faces, and their plaids about their shoulders; the convoy of children scattering (in a state of high pol-

ish) on the wayside, and every now and again collected by the shrill summons of the mother; and the mother herself, by a suggestive circumstance which might have afforded matter of thought to a more experienced observer than Archie, wrapped in a shawl nearly identical with Kirstie's but a thought more gaudy and conspicuously newer. At the sight, Kirstie grew more tall — Kirstie showed her classical profile, nose in air and nostril spread, the pure blood came in her cheek evenly in a delicate living pink.

"A braw day to ye, Mistress Elliott," said she, and hostility and gentility were nicely mingled in her tones. "A fine day, mem," the laird's wife would reply with a miraculous curtsey, spreading the while her plumage — setting off, in other words, and with arts unknown to the mere man, the pattern of her India shawl. Behind her, the whole Cauldstaneslap contingent marched in closer order, and with an indescribable air of being in the presence of the foe; and while Dandie saluted his aunt with a certain familiarity as of one who was well in court, Hob marched on in awful immobility. There appeared upon the face of this attitude in the family the consequences of some dreadful feud. Presumably the two women had been principals in the original encounter, and the laird had probably been drawn into the quarrel by the ears, too late to be included in the present skin-deep reconciliation.

"Kirstie," said Archie one day, "what is this you have against your family?"

"I dinna complean," said Kirstie, with a flush. "I say naething."

"I see you do not — not even good day to your own nephew," said he.

"I hae naething to be ashamed of," said she. "I can say the Lord's prayer with a good grace. If Hob was ill, or in preeson or poverty, I would see to him blithely. But for curtchying and complimenting and colloguing, thank ye kindly!"

Archie had a bit of a smile: he leaned back in his chair. "I think you and Mrs. Robert are not very good friends," says he slyly, "when you have your India shawls on?"

She looked upon him in silence, with a sparkling eye but an indecipherable expression; and that was all that Archie was ever destined to learn of the battle of the India shawls.

"Do none of them ever come here to see you?" he inquired.

"Mr. Archie," said she, "I hope that I ken my place better. It would be a queer thing, I think, if I was to clamjamfry up your faither's house . . . that I should say it! — wi' a dirty; black-a-vised clan, no ane o' them it was worth while to mar soap upon but just mysel'! Na, they're all damnifeed wi' the black Ellwalds. I have nae patience wi' black folk." Then, with a sudden consciousness of the case of Archie, "No that it maitters for men sae muckle," she made haste to add, "but there's naebody can deny that it's unwomanly. Long hair is the ornament o' woman ony way; we've good warrandise for that — it's in the Bible — and wha can doubt that the Apostle had some gowden-haired lassie in his mind — Apostle and all, for what was he but just a man like yersel'?"

CHAPTER VI

A LEAF FROM CHRISTINA'S PSALM-BOOK

ARCHIE was sedulous at church. Sunday after Sunday he sat down and stood up with that small company, heard the voice of Mr. Torrance leaping like an ill-played clarionet from key to key, and had an opportunity to study his moth-eaten gown and the black thread mittens that he joined together in prayer, and lifted up with a reverent solemnity in the act of benediction. Hermiston pew was a little square box, dwarfish in proportion with the kirk itself, and enclosing a table not much bigger than a footstool. There sat Archie an apparent prince, the only undeniable gentleman and the only great heritor in the parish, taking his ease in the only pew, for no other in the kirk had doors. Thence he might command an undisturbed view of that congregation of solid plaided men, strapping wives and daughters, oppressed children, and uneasy sheep-dogs. It was strange how Archie missed the look of race; except the dogs, with their refined foxy faces and inimitably curling tails, there was no one present with the least claim to gentility. The Cauldstaneslap party was scarcely an exception; Dandie perhaps, as he amused himself making verses through the interminable burden of the service, stood out a little by the glow in his eye and a certain superior animation of face and alertness

of body; but even Dandie slouched like a rustic. The rest of the congregation, like so many sheep, oppressed him with a sense of hob-nailed routine, day following day — of physical labour in the open air, oatmeal porridge, peas bannock, the somnolent fire-side in the evening, and the night-long nasal slumbers in a box-bed. Yet he knew many of them to be shrewd and humorous, men of character, notable women, making a bustle in the world and radiating an influence from their low-browed doors. He knew besides they were like other men; below the crust of custom, rapture found a way; he had heard them beat the timbrel before Bacchus — had heard them shout and carouse over their whisky toddy; and not the most Dutch-bottomed and severe faces among them all, not even the solemn elders themselves, but were capable of singular gambols at the voice of love. Men drawing near to an end of life's adventurous journey — maids thrilling with fear and curiosity on the threshold of entrance — women who had borne and perhaps buried children, who could remember the clinging of the small dead hands and the patter of the little feet now silent — he marvelled that among all those faces there should be no face of expectation, none that was mobile, none into which the rhythm and poetry of life had entered. "O for a live face," he thought; and at times he had a memory of Lady Flora; and at times he would study the living gallery before him with despair, and would see himself go on to waste his days in that joyless, pastoral place, and death come to him, and his grave be dug under the rowans, and the Spirit of the Earth laugh out in a thunder-peal at the huge fiasco.

On this particular Sunday, there was no doubt but that the spring had come at last. It was warm, with a latent shiver in the air that made the warmth only the more welcome. The shallows of the stream glittered and tinkled among bunches of primrose. Vagrant scents of the earth arrested Archie by the way with moments of ethereal intoxication. The grey, Quaker-ish dale was still only awakened in places and patches from the sobriety of its wintry colouring; and he wondered at its beauty; an essential beauty of the old earth it seemed to him, not resident in particulars but breathing to him from the whole. He surprised himself by a sudden impulse to write poetry — he did so sometimes, loose, galloping octosyllabics in the vein of Scott — and when he had taken his place on a boulder, near some fairy falls and shaded by a whip of a tree that was already radiant with new leaves, it still more surprised him that he should find nothing to write. His heart perhaps beat in time to some vast indwelling rhythm of the universe. By the time he came to a corner of the valley and could see the kirk, he had so lingered by the way that the first psalm was finishing. The nasal psalmody, full of turns and trills and graceless graces, seemed the essential voice of the kirk itself upraised in thanksgiving. "Everything's alive," he said; and again cries it aloud, "Thank God, everything's alive!" He lingered yet awhile in the kirk-yard. A tuft of primroses was blooming hard by the leg of an old, black table tombstone, and he stopped to contemplate the random apologue. They stood forth on the cold earth with a trenchancy of contrast; and he was struck with a sense of incompleteness in the day, the season,

and the beauty that surrounded him — the chill there was in the warmth, the gross black clods about the opening primroses, the damp earthy smell that was everywhere intermingled with the scents. The voice of the aged Torrance within rose in an ecstasy. And he wondered if Torrance also felt in his old bones the joyous influence of the spring morning; Torrance, or the shadow of what once was Torrance, that must come so soon to lie outside here in the sun and rain with all his rheumatisms, while a new minister stood in his room and thundered from his own familiar pulpit? The pity of it, and something of the chill of the grave, shook him for a moment as he made haste to enter.

He went up the aisle reverently and took his place in the pew with lowered eyes, for he feared he had already offended the kind old gentleman in the pulpit, and was sedulous to offend no farther. He could not follow the prayer, not even the heads of it. Brightnesses of azure, clouds of fragrance, a tinkle of falling water and singing birds, rose like exhalations from some deeper, aboriginal memory, that was not his, but belonged to the flesh on his bones. His body remembered; and it seemed to him that his body was in no way gross, but ethereal and perishable like a strain of music; and he felt for it an exquisite tenderness as for a child, an innocent, full of beautiful instincts and destined to an early death. And he felt for old Torrance — of the many supplications, of the few days — a pity that was near to tears. The prayer ended. Right over him was a tablet in the wall, the only ornament in the roughly masoned chapel — for it was no more; the tablet commemorated, I was about to say the virtues, but rather

the existence of a former Rutherford of Hermiston; and Archie, under that trophy of his long descent and local greatness, leaned back in the pew and contemplated vacancy with the shadow of a smile between playful and sad, that became him strangely. Dandie's sister, sitting by the side of Clem in her new Glasgow finery, chose that moment to observe the young laird. Aware of the stir of his entrance, the little formalist had kept her eyes fastened and her face prettily composed during the prayer. It was not hypocrisy, there was no one farther from a hypocrite. The girl had been taught to behave: to look up, to look down, to look unconscious, to look seriously impressed in church, and in every conjuncture to look her best. That was the game of female life, and she played it frankly. Archie was the one person in church who was of interest, who was somebody new, reputed eccentric, known to be young, and a laird, and still unseen by Christina. Small wonder that, as she stood there in her attitude of pretty decency, her mind should run upon him! If he spared a glance in her direction, he should know she was a well-behaved young lady who had been to Glasgow. In reason he must admire her clothes, and it was possible that he should think her pretty. At that her heart beat the least thing in the world; and she proceeded, by way of a corrective, to call up and dismiss a series of fancied pictures of the young man who should now, by rights, be looking at her. She settled on the plainest of them, a pink short young man with a dish face and no figure, at whose admiration she could afford to smile; but for all that, the consciousness of his gaze (which was really fixed on Torrance and his mittens) kept her in some-

thing of a flutter till the word Amen. Even then, she was far too well-bred to gratify her curiosity with any impatience. She resumed her seat languidly—this was a Glasgow touch—she composed her dress, rearranged her nosegay of primroses, looked first in front, then behind upon the other side, and at last allowed her eyes to move, without hurry, in the direction of the Hermiston pew. For a moment, they were riveted. Next she had plucked her gaze home again like a tame bird who should have meditated flight. Possibilities crowded on her; she hung over the future and grew dizzy; the image of this young man, slim, graceful, dark, with the inscrutable half-smile, attracted and repelled her like a chasm. "I wonder, will I have met my fate?" she thought, and her heart swelled.

Torrance was got some way into his first exposition, positing a deep layer of texts as he went along, laying the foundations of his discourse, which was to deal with a nice point in divinity, before Archie suffered his eyes to wander. They fell first of all on Clem, looking insupportably prosperous and patronizing Torrance with the favour of a modified attention, as of one who was used to better things in Glasgow. Though he had never before set eyes on him, Archie had no difficulty in identifying him, and no hesitation in pronouncing him vulgar, the worst of the family. Clem was leaning lazily forward when Archie first saw him. Presently he leaned nonchalantly back; and that deadly instrument, the maiden, was suddenly unmasked in profile. Though not quite in the front of the fashion (had anybody cared!), certain artful Glasgow mantua-makers, and her own inherent taste, had arrayed her to great advantage. Her

accoutrement was, indeed, a cause of heart-burning, and almost of scandal, in that infinitesimal kirk company. Mrs. Hob had said her say at Cauldstaneslap. "Daft-like!" she had pronounced it. "A jaiket that'll no meet! Whaur's the sense of a jaiket that'll no button upon you, if it should come to be weet? What do ye ca' thir things? Demmy brokens, d'ye say? They'll be brokens wi' a vengeance or ye can win back! Weel, I have naething to do wi' it — it's no good taste." Clem, whose purse had thus metamorphosed his sister, and who was not insensible to the advertisement, had come to the rescue with a "Hoot, woman! What do you ken of good taste that has never been to the ceety?" And Hob, looking on the girl with pleased smiles, as she timidly displayed her finery in the midst of the dark kitchen, had thus ended the dispute: "The cutty looks weel," he had said, "and it's no very like rain. Wear them the day, hizzie; but it's no a thing to make a practice o'." In the breasts of her rivals, coming to the kirk very conscious of white under-linen, and their faces splendid with much soap, the sight of the toilet had raised a storm of varying emotion, from the mere unenvious admiration that was expressed in the long-drawn "Eh!" to the angrier feeling that found vent in an emphatic "Set her up!" Her frock was of straw-coloured jaconet muslin, cut low at the bosom and short at the ankle, so as to display her *demi-broquins* of Regency violet, crossing with many straps upon a yellow cobweb stocking. According to the pretty fashion in which our grandmothers did not hesitate to appear, and our great-aunts went forth armed for the pursuit and capture of our great-uncles, the dress was drawn up so as to

mould the contour of both breasts, and in the nook between a cairngorm brooch maintained it. Here, too, surely in a very enviable position, trembled the nosegay of primroses. She wore on her shoulders — or rather, on her back and not her shoulders, which it scarcely passed — a French coat of sarsenet, tied in front with Margate braces, and of the same colour with her violet shoes. About her face clustered a disorder of dark ringlets, a little garland of yellow French roses surmounted her brow, and the whole was crowned by a village hat of chipped straw. Amongst all the rosy and all the weathered faces that surrounded her in church, she glowed like an open flower — girl and raiment, and the cairngorm that caught the daylight and returned it in a fiery flash, and the threads of bronze and gold that played in her hair.

Archie was attracted by the bright thing like a child. He looked at her again and yet again, and their looks crossed. The lip was lifted from her little teeth. He saw the red blood work vividly under her tawny skin. Her eye, which was great as a stag's, struck and held his gaze. He knew who she must be — Kirstie, she of the harsh diminutive, his housekeeper's niece, the sister of the rustic prophet, Gib — and he found in her the answer to his wishes.

Christina felt the shock of their encountering glances, and seemed to rise, clothed in smiles, into a region of the vague and bright. But the gratification was not more exquisite than it was brief. She looked away abruptly, and immediately began to blame herself for that abruptness. She knew what she should have done, too late — turned slowly with her nose in the air.

And meantime his look was not removed, but continued to play upon her like a battery of cannon constantly aimed, and now seemed to isolate her alone with him, and now seemed to uplift her, as on a pillory, before the congregation. For Archie continued to drink her in with his eyes, even as a wayfarer comes to a well-head on a mountain, and stoops his face, and drinks with thirst unassuageable. In the cleft of her little breasts the fiery eye of the topaz and the pale florets of primrose fascinated him. He saw the breasts heave, and the flowers shake with the heaving, and marvelled what should so much discompose the girl. And Christina was conscious of his gaze — saw it, perhaps, with the dainty plaything of an ear that peeped among her ringlets; she was conscious of changing colour, conscious of her unsteady breath. Like a creature tracked, run down, surrounded, she sought in a dozen ways to give herself a countenance. She used her handkerchief — it was a really fine one — then she desisted in a panic: "He would only think I was too warm." She took to reading in the metrical psalms, and then remembered it was sermon-time. Last she put a "sugar-bool" in her mouth, and the next moment repented of the step. It was such a homely-like thing! Mr. Archie would never be eating sweeties in kirk; and, with a palpable effort, she swallowed it whole, and her color flamed high. At this signal of distress Archie awoke to a sense of his ill-behaviour. What had he been doing? He had been exquisitely rude in church to the niece of his housekeeper; he had stared like a lackey and a libertine at a beautiful and modest girl. It was possible, it was even likely, he would be presented to her after

service in the kirk-yard, and then how was he to look. And there was no excuse. He had marked the tokens of her shame, of her increasing indignation, and he was such a fool that he had not understood them. Shame bowed him down, and he looked resolutely at Mr. Torrance; who little supposed, good, worthy man, as he continued to expound justification by faith, what was his true business: to play the part of derivative to a pair of children at the old game of falling in love.

Christina was greatly relieved at first. It seemed to her that she was clothed again. She looked back on what had passed. All would have been right if she had not blushed, a silly fool! There was nothing to blush at, if she *had* taken a sugar-bool. Mrs. MacTaggart, the elder's wife in St. Enoch's, took them often. And if he had looked at her, what was more natural than that a young gentleman should look at the best-dressed girl in church? And at the same time, she knew far otherwise, she knew there was nothing casual or ordinary in the look, and valued herself on its memory like a decoration. Well, it was a blessing he had found something else to look at! And presently she began to have other thoughts. It was necessary, she fancied, that she should put herself right by a repetition of the incident, better managed. If the wish was father to the thought, she did not know or she would not recognise it. It was simply as a manœuvre of propriety, as something called for to lessen the significance of what had gone before, that she should a second time meet his eyes, and this time without blushing. And at the memory of the blush, she blushed again, and became one general blush burning from head

to foot. Was ever anything so indelicate, so forward, done by a girl before? And here she was, making an exhibition of herself before the congregation about nothing! She stole a glance upon her neighbours, and behold! they were steadily indifferent, and Clem had gone to sleep. And still the one idea was becoming more and more potent with her, that in common prudence she must look again before the service ended. Something of the same sort was going forward in the mind of Archie, as he struggled with the load of penitence. So it chanced that, in the flutter of the moment when the last psalm was given out, and Torrance was reading the verse, and the leaves of every psalm-book in church were rustling under busy fingers, two stealthy glances were sent out like antennæ among the pews and on the indifferent and absorbed occupants, and drew timidly nearer to the straight line between Archie and Christina. They met, they lingered together for the least fraction of time, and that was enough. A charge as of electricity passed through Christina, and behold! the leaf of her psalm-book was torn across.

Archie was outside by the gate of the graveyard, conversing with Hob and the minister and shaking hands all round with the scattering congregation, when Clem and Christina were brought up to be presented. The laird took off his hat and bowed to her with grace and respect. Christina made her Glasgow curtsey to the laird, and went on again up the road for Hermiston and Cauldstaneslap, walking fast, breathing hurriedly with a heightened colour, and in this strange frame of mind, that when she was alone she seemed in high happiness, and when anyone addressed her she resented it like a

contradiction. A part of the way she had the company of some neighbour girls and a loutish young man; never had they seemed so insipid, never had she made herself so disagreeable. But these struck aside to their various destinations or were out-walked and left behind; and when she had driven off with sharp words the proffered convoy of some of her nephews and nieces, she was free to go on alone up Hermiston brae, walking on air, dwelling intoxicated among clouds of happiness. Near to the summit she heard steps behind her, a man's steps, light and very rapid. She knew the foot at once and walked the faster. "If it's me he's wanting he can run for it," she thought, smiling.

Archie overtook her like a man whose mind was made up.

"Miss Kirstie," he began.

"Miss Christina, if you please, Mr. Weir," she interrupted. "I canna bear the contraction."

"You forget it has a friendly sound for me. Your aunt is an old friend of mine and a very good one. I hope we shall see much of you at Hermiston?"

"My aunt and my sister-in-law doesna agree very well. Not that I have much ado with it. But still when I'm stopping in the house, if I was to be visiting my aunt, it would not look considerate-like."

"I am sorry," said Archie.

"I thank you kindly, Mr. Weir," she said. "I whiles think myself it's a great peety."

"Ah, I am sure your voice would always be for peace!" he cried.

"I wouldna be too sure of that," she said. "I have my days like other folk, I suppose."

"Do you know, in our old kirk, among our good old grey dames, you made an effect like sunshine."

"Ah, but that would be my Glasgow clothes!"

"I did not think I was so much under the influence of pretty frocks."

She smiled with a half look at him. "There's more than you!" she said. "But you see I'm only Cinderella. I'll have to put all these things by in my trunk; next Sunday I'll be as grey as the rest. They're Glasgow clothes, you see, and it would never do to make a practice of it. It would seem terrible conspicuous."

By that they were come to the place where their ways severed. The old grey moors were all about them; in the midst a few sheep wandered; and they could see on the one hand the straggling caravan scaling the braes in front of them for Cauldstaneslap, and on the other, the contingent from Hermiston bending off and beginning to disappear by detachments into the policy gate. It was in these circumstances that they turned to say farewell, and deliberately exchanged a glance as they shook hands. All passed as it should, genteelly; and in Christina's mind, as she mounted the first steep ascent for Cauldstaneslap, a gratifying sense of triumph prevailed over the recollection of minor lapses and mistakes. She had kilted her gown, as she did usually at that rugged pass; but when she spied Archie still standing and gazing after her, the skirts came down again as if by enchantment. Here was a piece of nicety for that upland parish, where the matrons marched with their coats kilted in the rain, and the lasses walked barefoot to kirk through the dust of summer, and went bravely down by the burnside, and sat on stones to

make a public toilet before entering! It was perhaps an air wafted from Glasgow; or perhaps it marked a stage of that dizziness of gratified vanity, in which the instinctive act passed unperceived. He was looking after! She unloaded her bosom of a prodigious sigh that was all pleasure, and betook herself to run. When she had overtaken the stragglers of her family, she caught up the niece whom she had so recently repulsed, and kissed and slapped her, and drove her away again, and ran after her with pretty cries and laughter. Perhaps she thought the laird might still be looking! But it chanced the little scene came under the view of eyes less favourable; for she overtook Mrs. Hob marching with Clem and Dand.

"You're shürely fey,[1] lass!" quoth Dandie.

"Think shame to yersel', miss!" said the strident Mrs. Hob. "Is this the gait to guide yersel' on the way hame frae kirk? You're shürely no sponsible the day. And anyway I would mind my guid claes."

"Hoot!" said Christina, and went on before them head in air, treading the rough track with the tread of a wild doe.

She was in love with herself, her destiny, the air of the hills, the benediction of the sun. All the way home, she continued under the intoxication of these sky-scraping spirits. At table she could talk freely of young Hermiston; gave her opinion of him off-hand and with a loud voice, that he was a handsome young gentleman, real well-mannered and sensible-like, but it was a pity he looked doleful. Only — the moment after — a memory

[1] Unlike yourself, strange, as persons are observed to be in the hour of approaching death or calamity.

of his eyes in church embarrassed her. But for this inconsiderable check, all through meal-time she had a good appetite, and she kept them laughing at table, until Gib (who had returned before them from Crossmichael and his separative worship) reproved the whole of them for their levity.

Singing "in to herself" as she went, her mind still in the turmoil of glad confusion, she rose and tripped upstairs to a little loft, lighted by four panes in the gable, where she slept with one of her nieces. The niece, who followed her, presuming on "Auntie's" high spirits, was flounced out of the apartment with small ceremony, and retired, smarting and half-tearful, to bury her woes in the byre among the hay. Still humming, Christina divested herself of her finery, and put her treasures one by one in her great green trunk. The last of these was the psalm-book; it was a fine piece, the gift of Mistress Clem, in distinct old-faced type, on paper that had begun to grow foxy in the warehouse — not by service — and she was used to wrap it in a handkerchief every Sunday after its period of service was over, and bury it end-wise at the head of her trunk. As she now took it in hand the book fell open where the leaf was torn, and she stood and gazed upon that evidence of her by-gone discomposure. There returned again the vision of the two brown eyes staring at her, intent and bright, out of that dark corner of the kirk. The whole appearance and attitude, the smile, the suggested gesture of young Hermiston came before her in a flash at the sight of the torn page. "I was surely fey!" she said, echoing the words of Dandie, and at the suggested doom her high spirits deserted her. She flung herself prone upon the bed,

and lay there, holding the psalm-book in her hands for hours, for the more part in a mere stupor of unconsenting pleasure and unreasoning fear. The fear was superstitious; there came up again and again in her memory Dandie's ill-omened words, and a hundred grisly and black tales out of the immediate neighbourhood read her a commentary on their force. The pleasure was never realized. You might say the joints of her body thought and remembered, and were gladdened, but her essential self, in the immediate theatre of consciousness, talked feverishly of something else, like a nervous person at a fire. The image that she most complacently dwelt on was that of Miss Christina in her character of the Fair Lass of Cauldstaneslap, carrying all before her in the straw-coloured frock, the violet mantle, and the yellow cobweb stockings. Archie's image, on the other hand, when it presented itself was never welcomed — far less welcomed with any ardour, and it was exposed at times to merciless criticism. In the long, vague dialogues she held in her mind, often with imaginary, often with unrealised interlocutors, Archie, if he were referred to at all, came in for savage handling. He was described as "looking like a stork," "staring like a caulf," "a face like a ghaist's." "Do you call that manners?" she said; or, "I soon put him in his place." "'*Miss Christina, if you please, Mr. Weir!*' says I, and just flyped up my skirt tails." With gabble like this she would entertain herself long whiles together, and then her eye would perhaps fall on the torn leaf, and the eyes of Archie would appear again from the darkness of the wall, and the voluble words deserted her, and she would lie still and stupid, and think upon nothing with devotion,

and be sometimes raised by a quiet sigh. Had a doctor of medicine come into that loft, he would have diagnosed a healthy, well-developed, eminently vivacious lass lying on her face in a fit of the sulks; not one who had just contracted, or was just contracting, a mortal sickness of the mind which should yet carry her towards death and despair. Had it been a doctor of psychology, he might have been pardoned for divining in the girl a passion of childish vanity, self-love *in excelsis,* and no more. It is to be understood that I have been painting chaos and describing the inarticulate. Every lineament that appears is too precise, almost every word used too strong. Take a finger-post in the mountains on a day of rolling mists; I have but copied the names that appear upon the pointers, the names of definite and famous cities far distant, and now perhaps basking in sunshine; but Christina remained all these hours, as it were, at the foot of the post itself, not moving, and enveloped in mutable and blinding wreaths of haze.

The day was growing late and the sunbeams long and level, when she sat suddenly up, and wrapped in its handkerchief and put by that psalm-book which had already played a part so decisive in the first chapter of her love-story. In the absence of the mesmerist's eye, we are told nowadays that the head of a bright nail may fill his place, if it be steadfastly regarded. So that torn page had riveted her attention on what might else have been but little, and perhaps soon forgotten; while the ominous words of Dandie — heard, not heeded, and still remembered — had lent to her thoughts, or rather to her mood, a cast of solemnity, and that idea of Fate — a pagan Fate, uncontrolled by any Christian deity, ob-

scure, lawless, and august — moving indissuadably in the affairs of Christian men. Thus even that phenomenon of love at first sight, which is so rare and seems so simple and violent, like a disruption of life's tissue, may be decomposed into a sequence of accidents happily concurring.

She put on a grey frock and a pink kerchief, looked at herself a moment with approval in the small square of glass that served her for a toilet mirror, and went softly down-stairs through the sleeping house that resounded with the sound of afternoon snoring. Just outside the door Dandie was sitting with a book in his hand, not reading, only honouring the Sabbath by a sacred vacancy of mind. She came near him and stood still.

"I 'm for off up the muirs, Dandie," she said.

There was something unusually soft in her tones that made him look up. She was pale, her eyes dark and bright; no trace remained of the levity of the morning.

"Ay, lass? Ye'll have ye're ups and downs like me, I'm thinkin'," he observed.

"What for do ye say that?" she asked.

"O, for naething," says Dand. "Only I think ye're mair like me than the lave of them. Ye've mair of the poetic temper, tho' Guid kens little enough of the poetic taalent. It's an ill gift at the best. Look at yoursel'. At denner you were all sunshine and flowers and laughter, and now you 're like the star of evening on a lake."

She drank in this hackneyed compliment like wine, and it glowed in her veins.

"But I'm saying, Dand" — she came nearer him — "I'm for the muirs. I must have a braith of air. If

Clem was to be speiring for me, try and quaiet him, will ye no?"

"What way?" said Dandie. "I ken but the ae way, and that's leein'. I'll say ye had a sair heed, if ye like."

"But I havena," she objected.

"I daur say not," he returned. "I said I would say ye had; and if ye like to nay-say me when ye come back, it'll no mateerially maitter, for my chara'ter's clean gane a'ready past reca'."

"O, Dand, are ye a leear?" she asked, lingering.

"Folks say sae," replied the bard.

"Wha says sae?" she pursued.

"Them that should ken the best," he responded. "The lassies, for ane."

"But, Dand, you would never lee to me?" she asked.

"I'll leave that for your pairt of it, ye girzie," said he. "Ye'll lee to me fast eneuch, when ye hae gotten a jo. I'm tellin' ye and it's true; when you have a jo, Miss Kirstie, it'll be for guid and ill. I ken: I was made that way mysel', but the deil was in my luck! Here, gang awa wi' ye to your muirs, and let me be; I'm in an hour of inspiraution, ye upsetting tawpie!"

But she clung to her brother's neighbourhood, she knew not why.

"Will ye no gie's a kiss, Dand?" she said. "I aye likit ye fine."

He kissed her and considered her a moment; he found something strange in her. But he was a libertine through and through, nourished equal contempt and suspicion of all womankind, and paid his way among them habitually with idle compliments.

"Gae wa' wi' ye!" said he. "Ye're a dentie baby, and be content wi' that!"

That was Dandie's way; a kiss and a comfit to Jenny — a bawbee and my blessing to Jill — and good night to the whole clan of ye, my dears! When anything approached the serious, it became a matter for men, he both thought and said. Women, when they did not absorb, were only children to be shoo'd away. Merely in his character of connoisseur, however, Dandie glanced carelessly after his sister as she crossed the meadow. "The brat's no that bad!" he thought with surprise, for though he had just been paying her compliments, he had not really looked at her. "Hey! what's yon?" For the grey dress was cut with short sleeves and skirts, and displayed her trim strong legs clad in pink stockings of the same shade as the kerchief she wore round her shoulders, and that shimmered as she went. This was not her way in undress; he knew her ways and the ways of the whole sex in the country-side, no one better; when they did not go barefoot, they wore stout "rig and furrow" woollen hose of an invisible blue mostly, when they were not black outright; and Dandie, at sight of this daintiness, put two and two together. It was a silk handkerchief, then they would be silken hose; they matched — then the whole outfit was a present of Clem's, a costly present, and not something to be worn through bog and briar, or on a late afternoon of Sunday. He whistled. "My denty May, either your heid's fair turned, or there's some on-goings!" he observed, and dismissed the subject.

She went slowly at first, but ever straighter and faster for the Cauldstaneslap, a pass among the hills to which

the farm owed its name. The Slap opened like a doorway between two rounded hillocks; and through this ran the short cut to Hermiston. Immediately on the other side it went down through the Deil's Hags, a considerable marshy hollow of the hill-tops, full of springs, and crouching junipers, and pools where the black peat-water slumbered. There was no view from here. A man might have sat upon the Praying Weaver's stone a half-century, and seen none but the Cauldstaneslap children twice in the twenty-four hours on their way to the school and back again, an occasional shepherd, the irruption of a clan of sheep, or the birds who haunted about the springs, drinking and shrilly piping. So, when she had once passed the Slap, Kirstie was received into seclusion. She looked back a last time at the farm. It still lay deserted except for the figure of Dandie, who was now seen to be scribbling in his lap, the hour of expected inspiration having come to him at last. Thence she passed rapidly through the morass, and came to the further end of it, where a sluggish burn discharges, and the path for Hermiston accompanies it on the beginning of its downward path. From this corner a wide view was opened to her of the whole stretch of braes upon the other side, still sallow and in places rusty with the winter, with the path marked boldly, here and there by the burnside a tuft of birches, and — three miles off as the crow flies — from its enclosures and young plantations, the windows of Hermiston glittering in the western sun.

Here she sat down and waited, and looked for a long time at these far-away bright panes of glass. It amused her to have so extended a view, she thought. It amused

her to see the house of Hermiston — to see "folk"; and there was an indistinguishable human unit, perhaps the gardener, visibly sauntering on the gravel paths.

By the time the sun was down and all the easterly braes lay plunged in clear shadow, she was aware of another figure coming up the path at a most unequal rate of approach, now half-running, now pausing and seeming to hesitate. She watched him at first with a total suspension of thought. She held her thought as a person holds his breathing. Then she consented to recognize him. "He'll no be coming here, he canna be; it's no possible." And there began to grow upon her a subdued choking suspense. He *was* coming; his hesitations had quite ceased, his step grew firm and swift; no doubt remained; and the question loomed up before her instant: what was she to do? It was all very well to say that her brother was a laird himself; it was all very well to speak of casual intermarriages and to count cousinship, like Auntie Kirstie. The difference in their social station was trenchant; propriety, prudence, all that she had ever learned, all that she knew, bade her flee. But on the other hand the cup of life now offered to her was too enchanting. For one moment, she saw the question clearly, and definitely made her choice. She stood up and showed herself an instant in the gap relieved upon the sky line; and the next, fled trembling and sat down glowing with excitement on the Weaver's stone. She shut her eyes, seeking, praying for composure. Her hand shook in her lap, and her mind was full of incongruous and futile speeches. What was there to make a work about? She could take care of herself, she supposed! There

was no harm in seeing the laird. It was the best thing that could happen. She would mark a proper distance to him once and for all. Gradually the wheels of her nature ceased to go round so madly, and she sat in passive expectation, a quiet, solitary figure in the midst of the grey moss. I have said she was no hypocrite, but here I am at fault. She never admitted to herself that she had come up the hill to look for Archie. And perhaps after all she did not know, perhaps came as a stone falls. For the steps of love in the young, and especially in girls, are instinctive and unconscious.

In the meantime Archie was drawing rapidly near, and he at least was consciously seeking her neighbourhood. The afternoon had turned to ashes in his mouth; the memory of the girl had kept him from reading and drawn him as with cords; and at last, as the cool of the evening began to come on, he had taken his hat and set forth, with a smothered ejaculation, by the moor path to Cauldstaneslap. He had no hope to find her; he took the off chance without expectation of result and to relieve his uneasiness. The greater was his surprise, as he surmounted the slope and came into the hollow of the Deil's Hags, to see there, like an answer to his wishes, the little womanly figure in the grey dress and the pink kerchief sitting little, and low, and lost, and acutely solitary, in these desolate surroundings and on the weather-beaten stone of the dead weaver. Those things that still smacked of winter were all rusty about her, and those things that already relished of the spring had put forth the tender and lively colours of the season. Even in the unchanging face of the death-stone changes were to be remarked; and in the channeled-lettering,

the moss began to renew itself in jewels of green. By an after-thought that was a stroke of art, she had turned up over her head the back of the kerchief; so that it now framed becomingly her vivacious and yet pensive face. Her feet were gathered under her on the one side, and she leaned on her bare arm, which showed out strong and round, tapered to a slim wrist, and shimmered in the fading light.

Young Hermiston was struck with a certain chill. He was reminded that he now dealt in serious matters of life and death. This was a grown woman he was approaching, endowed with her mysterious potencies and attractions, the treasury of the continued race, and he was neither better nor worse than the average of his sex and age. He had a certain delicacy which had preserved him hitherto unspotted, and which (had either of them guessed it) made him a more dangerous companion when his heart should be really stirred. His throat was dry as he came near; but the appealing sweetness of her smile stood between them like a guardian angel.

For she turned to him and smiled, though without rising. There was a shade in this cavalier greeting that neither of them perceived; neither he, who simply thought it gracious and charming as herself; nor yet she, who did not observe (quick as she was) the difference between rising to meet the laird and remaining seated to receive the expected admirer.

"Are ye stepping west, Hermiston?" said she, giving him his territorial name after the fashion of the country-side.

"I was," said he a little hoarsely, "but I think I will be about the end of my stroll now. Are you like me,

Miss Christina? the house would not hold me. I came here seeking air."

He took his seat at the other end of the tombstone and studied her, wondering what was she. There was infinite import in the question alike for her and him.

"Ay," she said. "I couldna bear the roof either. It's a habit of mine to come up here about the gloaming when it's quaiet and caller."

"It was a habit of my mother's also," he said gravely. The recollection half-startled him as he expressed it. He looked around. "I have scarce been here since. It's peaceful," he said, with a long breath.

"It's no like Glasgow," she replied. "A weary place, yon Glasgow! But what a day have I had for my hame-coming, and what a bonny evening!"

"Indeed, it was a wonderful day," said Archie. "I think I will remember it years and years until I come to die. On days like this — I do not know if you feel as I do — but everything appears so brief, and fragile, and exquisite, that I am afraid to touch life. We are here for so short a time; and all the old people before us — Rutherfords of Hermiston, Elliotts of the Cauldstaneslap — that were here but a while since, riding about and keeping up a great noise in this quiet corner — making love too, and marrying — why, where are they now? It's deadly commonplace, but after all, the commonplaces are the great poetic truths."

He was sounding her, semi-consciously, to see if she could understand him; to learn if she were only an animal the colour of flowers, or had a soul in her to keep her sweet. She, on her part, her means well in hand, watched, womanlike, for any opportunity to shine, to

abound in his humour, whatever that might be. The dramatic artist, that lies dormant or only half-awake in most human beings, had in her sprung to his feet in a divine fury, and chance had served her well. She looked upon him with a subdued twilight look that became the hour of the day and the train of thought; earnestness shone through her like stars in the purple west; and from the great but controlled upheaval of her whole nature there passed into her voice, and rang in her lightest words, a thrill of emotion.

"Have you mind of Dand's song?" she answered. "I think he'll have been trying to say what you have been thinking."

"No, I never heard it," he said, "Repeat it to me, can you?"

"It's nothing wanting the tune," said Kirstie.

"Then sing it me," said he.

"On the Lord's Day? That would never do, Mr. Weir!"

"I am afraid I am not so strict a keeper of the Sabbath, and there is no one in this place to hear us, unless the poor old ancient under the stone."

"No that I'm thinking that really," she said. "By my way of thinking, it's just as serious as a psalm. Will I sooth it to ye, then?"

"If you please," said he, and, drawing near to her on the tombstone, prepared to listen.

She sat up as if to sing. "I'll only can sooth it to ye," she explained. "I wouldna like to sing out loud on the Sabbath. I think the birds would carry news of it to Gilbert," and she smiled. "It's about the Elliotts," she continued, "and I think there's few bonnier

bits in the book-poets, though Dand has never got printed yet."

And she began, in the low, clear tones of her half-voice, now sinking almost to a whisper, now rising to a particular note which was her best, and which Archie learned to wait for with growing emotion: —

O they rade in the rain, in the days that are gane,
In the rain and the wind and the lave,
They shoutit in the ha' and they routit on the hill,
But they're a' quaitit noo in the grave.
Auld, auld Elliotts, clay-cauld Elliotts, dour, bauld Elliotts of auld!

All the time she sang she looked steadfastly before her, her knees straight, her hands upon her knee, her head cast back and up. The expression was admirable throughout, for had she not learned it from the lips and under the criticism of the author? When it was done, she turned upon Archie a face softly bright, and eyes gently suffused and shining in the twilight, and his heart rose and went out to her with boundless pity and sympathy. His question was answered. She was a human being tuned to a sense of the tragedy of life; there were pathos and music and a great heart in the girl.

He arose instinctively, she also; for she saw she had gained a point, and scored the impression deeper, and she had wit enough left to flee upon a victory. They were but commonplaces that remained to be exchanged, but the low, moved voices in which they passed made them sacred in the memory. In the falling greyness of the evening he watched her figure winding through

the morass, saw it turn a last time and wave a hand, and then pass through the Slap; and it seemed to him as if something went along with her out of the deepest of his heart. And something surely had come, and come to dwell there. He had retained from childhood a picture, now half-obliterated by the passage of time and the multitude of fresh impressions, of his mother telling him, with the fluttered earnestness of her voice, and often with dropping tears, the tale of the "Praying Weaver," on the very scene of his brief tragedy and long repose. And now there was a companion piece; and he beheld, and he should behold forever, Christina perched on the same tomb, in the grey colours of the evening, gracious, dainty, perfect as a flower, and she also singing —

> Of old, unhappy far-off things,
> And battles long ago,

— of their common ancestors now dead, of their rude wars composed, their weapons buried with them, and of these strange changelings, their descendants, who lingered a little in their places, and would soon be gone also, and perhaps sung of by others at the gloaming hour. By one of the unconscious arts of tenderness the two women were enshrined together in his memory. Tears, in that hour of sensibility, came into his eyes indifferently at the thought of either, and the girl, from being something merely bright and shapely, was caught up into the zone of things serious as life and death and his dead mother. So that in all ways and on either side, Fate played his game artfully with this poor pair of children. The generations were prepared, the

pangs were made ready, before the curtain rose on the dark drama.

In the same moment of time that she disappeared from Archie, there opened before Kirstie's eyes the cup-like hollow in which the farm lay. She saw, some five hundred feet below her, the house making itself bright with candles, and this was a broad hint to her to hurry. For they were only kindled on a Sabbath night with a view to that family worship which rounded in the incomparable tedium of the day and brought on the relaxation of supper. Already she knew that Robert must be within-sides at the head of the table, "waling the portions;" for it was Robert in his quality of family priest and judge, not the gifted Gilbert, who officiated. She made good time accordingly down the steep ascent, and came up to the door panting as the three younger brothers, all roused at last from slumber, stood together in the cool and the dark of the evening with a fry of nephews and nieces about them, chatting and awaiting the expected signal. She stood back; she had no mind to direct attention to her late arrival or to her labouring breath.

"Kirstie, ye have shaved it this time, my lass," said Clem. "Whaur were ye?"

"O, just taking a dander by mysel'," said Kirstie.

And the talk continued on the subject of the American war, without further reference to the truant who stood by them in the covert of the dusk, thrilling with happiness and the sense of guilt.

The signal was given, and the brothers began to go in one after another, amid the jostle and throng of Hob's children.

Only Dandie, waiting till the last, caught Kirstie by the arm. "When did ye begin to dander in pink hosen, Mistress Elliott?" he whispered slyly.

She looked down; she was one blush. "I maun have forgotten to change them," said she; and went in to prayers in her turn with a troubled mind, between anxiety as to whether Dand should have observed her yellow stockings at church, and should thus detect her in a palpable falsehood, and shame that she had already made good his prophecy.

She remembered the words of it, how it was to be when she had gotten a jo, and that that would be for good and evil. "Will I have gotten my jo now?" she thought with a secret rapture.

And all through prayers, where it was her principal business to conceal the pink stockings from the eyes of the indifferent Mrs. Hob — and all through supper, as she made a feint of eating, and sat at the table radiant and constrained — and again when she had left them and come into her chamber, and was alone with her sleeping niece, and could at last lay aside the armour of society — the same words sounded within her, the same profound note of happiness, of a world all changed and renewed, of a day that had been passed in Paradise, and of a night that was to be heaven opened. All night she seemed to be conveyed smoothly upon a shallow stream of sleep and waking, and through the bowers of Beulah; all night she cherished to her heart that exquisite hope; and if, towards morning, she forgot it awhile in a more profound unconsciousness, it was to catch again the rainbow thought with her first moment of awaking.

CHAPTER VII

ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES

Two days later a gig from Crossmichael deposited Frank Innes at the doors of Hermiston. Once in a way, during the past winter, Archie, in some acute phase of boredom, had written him a letter. It had contained something in the nature of an invitation, or a reference to an invitation — precisely what, neither of them now remembered. When Innes had received it, there had been nothing further from his mind than to bury himself in the moors with Archie; but not even the most acute political heads are guided through the steps of life with unerring directness. That would require a gift of prophecy which has been denied to man. For instance, who could have imagined that, not a month after he had received the letter, and turned it into mockery, and put off answering it, and in the end lost it, misfortunes of a gloomy cast should begin to thicken over Frank's career? His case may be briefly stated. His father, a small Morayshire laird with a large family, became recalcitrant and cut off the supplies; he had fitted himself out with the beginnings of quite a good law library, which, upon some sudden losses on the turf, he had been obliged to sell before they were paid for; and his bookseller, hearing some rumour of the event, took out a

warrant for his arrest. Innes had early word of it, and was able to take precautions. In this immediate welter of his affairs, with an unpleasant charge hanging over him, he had judged it the part of prudence to be off instantly, had written a fervid letter to his father at Inverauld, and put himself in the coach for Crossmichael. Any port in a storm! He was manfully turning his back on the Parliament House and its gay babble, on porter and oysters, the racecourse and the ring; and manfully prepared, until these clouds should have blown by, to share a living grave with Archie Weir at Hermiston.

To do him justice, he was no less surprised to be going than Archie was to see him come; and he carried off his wonder with an infinitely better grace.

"Well, here I am!" said he, as he alighted. "Pylades has come to Orestes at last. By the way, did you get my answer? No? How very provoking! Well, here I am to answer for myself, and that's better still."

"I am very glad to see you, of course," said Archie. "I make you heartily welcome, of course. But you surely have not come to stay, with the courts still sitting; is that not most unwise?"

"Damn the courts!" says Frank. "What are the courts to friendship and a little fishing?"

And so it was agreed that he was to stay, with no term to the visit but the term which he had privily set to it himself — the day, namely, when his father should have come down with the dust, and he should be able to pacify the bookseller. On such vague conditions there began for these two young men (who were not even friends) a life of great familiarity and, as the days grew on, less and less intimacy. They were together

at meal times, together o' nights when the hour had come for whisky toddy; but it might have been noticed (had there been anyone to pay heed) that they were rarely so much together by day. Archie had Hermiston to attend to, multifarious activities in the hills, in which he did not require, and had even refused, Frank's escort. He would be off sometimes in the morning and leave only a note on the breakfast table to announce the fact; and sometimes, with no notice at all, he would not return for dinner until the hour was long past. Innes groaned under these desertions; it required all his philosophy to sit down to a solitary breakfast with composure, and all his unaffected good-nature to be able to greet Archie with friendliness on the more rare occasions when he came home late for dinner.

"I wonder what on earth he finds to do, Mrs. Elliott?" said he one morning, after he had just read the hasty billet and sat down to table.

"I suppose it will be business, sir," replied the housekeeper dryly, measuring his distance off to him by an indicated curtsey.

"But I can't imagine what business!" he reiterated.

"I suppose it will be *his* business," retorted the austere Kirstie.

He turned to her with that happy brightness that made the charm of his disposition, and broke into a peal of healthy and natural laughter.

"Well played, Mrs. Elliott!" he cried, and the housekeeper's face relaxed into the shadow of an iron smile. "Well played indeed!" said he. "But you must not be making a stranger of me like that. Why, Archie and I were at the High School together, and we've been to

college together, and we were going to the Bar together, when — you know! Dear, dear me! what a pity that was! A life spoiled, a fine young fellow as good as buried here in the wilderness with rustics; and all for what? A frolic, silly, if you like, but no more. God, how good your scones are, Mrs. Elliott!"

"They're no mines, it was the lassie made them," said Kirstie; "and, saving your presence, there's little sense in taking the Lord's name in vain about idle vivers that you fill your kyte wi'."

"I daresay you're perfectly right, ma'am," quoth the imperturbable Frank. "But, as I was saying, this is a pitiable business, this about poor Archie; and you and I might do worse than put our heads together, like a couple of sensible people, and bring it to an end. Let me tell you, ma'am, that Archie is really quite a promising young man, and in my opinion he would do well at the Bar. As for his father, no one can deny his ability, and I don't fancy anyone would care to deny that he has the deil's own temper —"

"If you'll excuse me, Mr. Innes, I think the lass is crying on me," said Kirstie, and flounced from the room.

"The damned, cross-grained, old broom-stick!" ejaculated Innes.

In the meantime, Kirstie had escaped into the kitchen, and before her vassal gave vent to her feelings.

"Here, ettercap! Ye'll have to wait on yon Innes! I canna haud myself in. 'Puir Erchie'! I'd 'puir Erchie' him, if I had my way! And Hermiston with the deil's ain temper! God, let him take Hermiston's scones out of his mouth first. There's no a hair on ayther o'

the Weirs that hasna mair spunk and dirdum to it than what he has in his hale dwaibly body! Settin' up his snash to me! Let him gang to the black toon where he's mebbe wantit — birling in a curricle — wi' pimatum on his heid — making a mess o' himsel' wi' nesty hizzies — a fair disgrace!" It was impossible to hear without admiration Kirstie's graduated disgust, as she brought forth, one after another, these somewhat baseless charges. Then she remembered her immediate purpose, and turned again on her fascinated auditor. "Do ye no hear me, tawpie? Do ye no hear what I'm tellin' ye? Will I have to shoo ye in to him? If I come to attend to ye, mistress!" And the maid fled the kitchen, which had become practically dangerous, to attend on Innes' wants in the front parlour.

Tantæne iræ? Has the reader perceived the reason? Since Frank's coming there were no more hours of gossip over the supper tray! All his blandishments were in vain; he had started handicapped on the race for Mrs. Elliott's favour.

But it was a strange thing how misfortune dogged him in his efforts to be genial. I must guard the reader against accepting Kirstie's epithets as evidence; she was more concerned for their vigour than for their accuracy. Dwaibly, for instance; nothing could be more calumnious. Frank was the very picture of good looks, good humour, and manly youth. He had bright eyes with a sparkle and a dance to them, curly hair, a charming smile, brilliant teeth, an admirable carriage of the head, the look of a gentleman, the address of one accustomed to please at first sight and to improve the impression. And with all these advantages, he failed with

everyone about Hermiston; with the silent shepherd, with the obsequious grieve, with the groom who was also the ploughman, with the gardener and the gardener's sister — a pious, down-hearted woman with a shawl over her ears — he failed equally and flatly. They did not like him, and they showed it. The little maid, indeed, was an exception; she admired him devoutly, probably dreamed of him in her private hours; but she was accustomed to play the part of silent auditor to Kirstie's tirades and silent recipient of Kirstie's buffets, and she had learned not only to be a very capable girl of her years, but a very secret and prudent one besides. Frank was thus conscious that he had one ally and sympathiser in the midst of that general union of disfavour that surrounded, watched, and waited on him in the house of Hermiston; but he had little comfort or society from that alliance, and the demure little maid (twelve on her last birthday) preserved her own counsel, and tripped on his service, brisk, dumbly responsive, but inexorably unconversational. For the others, they were beyond hope and beyond endurance. Never had a young Apollo been cast among such rustic barbarians. But perhaps the cause of his ill-success lay in one trait which was habitual and unconscious with him, yet diagnostic of the man. It was his practice to approach any one person at the expense of someone else. He offered you an alliance against the someone else; he flattered you by slighting him; you were drawn into a small intrigue against him before you knew how. Wonderful are the virtues of this process generally; but Frank's mistake was in the choice of the someone else. He was not politic in that; he listened to the voice of

irritation. Archie had offended him at first by what he had felt to be rather a dry reception; had offended him since by his frequent absences. He was besides the one figure continually present in Frank's eye; and it was to his immediate dependents that Frank could offer the snare of his sympathy. Now the truth is that the Weirs, father and son, were surrounded by a posse of strenuous loyalists. Of my lord they were vastly proud. It was a distinction in itself to be one of the vassals of the "Hanging Judge," and his gross, formidable joviality was far from unpopular in the neighbourhood of his home. For Archie they had, one and all, a sensitive affection and respect which recoiled from a word of belittlement.

Nor was Frank more successful when he went farther afield. To the Four Black Brothers, for instance, he was antipathetic in the highest degree. Hob thought him too light, Gib too profane. Clem, who saw him but for a day or two before he went to Glasgow, wanted to know what the fule's business was, and whether he meant to stay here all session time! "Yon's a drone," he pronounced. As for Dand, it will be enough to describe their first meeting, when Frank had been whipping a river and the rustic celebrity chanced to come along the path.

"I'm told you are quite a poet," Frank had said.

"Wha tell 't ye that, mannie?" had been the unconciliating answer.

"O, everybody," says Frank.

"God! Here's fame!" said the sardonic poet, and he had passed on his way.

Come to think of it, we have here perhaps a truer

explanation of Frank's failures. Had he met Mr. Sheriff Scott he could have turned a neater compliment, because Mr. Scott would have been a friend worth making. Dand, on the other hand, he did not value sixpence, and he showed it even while he tried to flatter. Condescension is an excellent thing, but it is strange how one-sided the pleasure of it is! He who goes fishing among the Scots peasantry with condescension for a bait will have an empty basket by evening.

In proof of this theory Frank made a great success of it at the Crossmichael Club, to which Archie took him immediately on his arrival; his own last appearance on that scene of gaiety. Frank was made welcome there at once, continued to go regularly, and had attended a meeting (as the members ever after loved to tell) on the evening before his death. Young Hay and young Pringle appeared again. There was another supper at Windielaws, another dinner at Driffel; and it resulted in Frank being taken to the bosom of the county people as unreservedly as he had been repudiated by the country folk. He occupied Hermiston after the manner of an invader in a conquered capital. He was perpetually issuing from it, as from a base, to toddy parties, fishing parties, and dinner parties, to which Archie was not invited, or to which Archie would not go. It was now that the name of The Recluse became general for the young man. Some say that Innes invented it; Innes, at least, spread it abroad.

"How's all with your Recluse to-day?" people would ask.

"O, reclusing away!" Innes would declare, with his bright air of saying something witty; and immedi-

ately interrupt the general laughter which he had provoked much more by his air than his words, "Mind you, it's all very well laughing, but I 'm not very well pleased. Poor Archie is a good fellow, an excellent fellow, a fellow I always liked. I think it small of him to take his little disgrace so hard and shut himself up. 'Grant that it is a ridiculous story, painfully ridiculous,' I keep telling him. 'Be a man! Live it down, man!' But not he. Of course it's just solitude, and shame, and all that. But I confess I 'm beginning to fear the result. It would be all the pities in the world if a really promising fellow like Weir was to end ill. I'm seriously tempted to write to Lord Hermiston, and put it plainly to him."

"I would if I were you," some of his auditors would say, shaking the head, sitting bewildered and confused at this new view of the matter, so deftly indicated by a single word. "A capital idea!" they would add, and wonder at the *aplomb* and position of this young man, who talked as a matter of course of writing to Hermiston and correcting him upon his private affairs.

And Frank would proceed, sweetly confidential: "I 'll give you an idea, now. He 's actually sore about the way that I 'm received and he's left out in the county — actually jealous and sore. I've rallied him and I've reasoned with him, told him that everyone was most kindly inclined towards him, told him even that I was received merely because I was his guest. But it's no use. He will neither accept the invitations he gets, nor stop brooding about the ones where he's left out. What I'm afraid of is that the wound's ulcerating. He had always one of those dark, secret, angry

natures — a little underhand and plenty of bile — you know the sort. He must have inherited it from the Weirs, whom I suspect to have been a worthy family of weavers somewhere; what's the cant phrase! — sedentary occupation. It's precisely the kind of character to go wrong in a false position like what his father's made for him, or he's making for himself, whichever you like to call it. And for my part, I think it a disgrace," Frank would say generously.

Presently the sorrow and anxiety of this disinterested friend took shape. He began in private, in conversations of two, to talk vaguely of bad habits and low habits. "I must say I'm afraid he's going wrong altogether," he would say. "I'll tell you plainly, and between ourselves, I scarcely like to stay there any longer; only, man, I'm positively afraid to leave him alone. You'll see, I shall be blamed for it later on. I'm staying at a great sacrifice. I'm hindering my chances at the Bar, and I can't blind my eyes to it. And what I'm afraid of is that I'm going to get kicked for it all round before all's done. You see, nobody believes in friendship nowadays."

"Well, Innes," his interlocutor would reply, "it's very good of you, I must say that. If there's any blame going you'll always be sure of *my* good word, for one thing."

"Well," Frank would continue, "candidly, I don't say it's pleasant. He has a very rough way with him; his father's son, you know. I don't say he's rude — of course, I couldn't be expected to stand that — but he steers very near the wind. No, it's not pleasant; but I tell ye, man, in conscience I don't think it would be

fair to leave him. Mind you, I don't say there's anything actually wrong. What I say is that I don't like the looks of it, man!" and he would press the arm of his momentary confidant.

In the early stages I am persuaded there was no malice. He talked but for the pleasure of airing himself. He was essentially glib, as becomes the young advocate, and essentially careless of the truth, which is the mark of the young ass; and so he talked at random. There was no particular bias, but that one which is indigenous and universal, to flatter himself and to please and interest the present friend. And by thus milling air out of his mouth, he had presently built up a presentation of Archie which was known and talked of in all corners of the county. Wherever there was a residential house and a walled garden, wherever there was a dwarfish castle and a park, wherever a quadruple cottage by the ruins of a peel-tower showed an old family going down, and wherever a handsome villa with a carriage approach and a shrubbery marked the coming up of a new one—probably on the wheels of machinery —Archie began to be regarded in the light of a dark, perhaps a vicious mystery, and the future developments of his career to be looked for with uneasiness and confidential whispering. He had done something disgraceful, my dear. What, was not precisely known, and that good kind young man, Mr. Innes, did his best to make light of it. But there it was. And Mr. Innes was very anxious about him now; he was really uneasy, my dear; he was positively wrecking his own prospects because he dared not leave him alone. How wholly we all lie at the mercy of a single prater, not

needfully with any malign purpose! And if a man but talks of himself in the right spirit, refers to his virtuous actions by the way, and never applies to them the name of virtue, how easily his evidence is accepted in the court of public opinion.

All this while, however, there was a more poisonous ferment at work between the two lads, which came late indeed to the surface, but had modified and magnified their dissensions from the first. To an idle, shallow, easy-going customer like Frank, the smell of a mystery was attractive. It gave his mind something to play with, like a new toy to a child; and it took him on the weak side, for like many young men coming to the Bar, and before they have been tried and found wanting, he flattered himself he was a fellow of unusual quickness and penetration. They knew nothing of Sherlock Holmes in these days, but there was a good deal said of Talleyrand. And if you could have caught Frank off his guard, he would have confessed with a smirk, that, if he resembled anyone, it was the Marquis de Talleyrand-Périgord. It was on the occasion of Archie's first absence that this interest took root. It was vastly deepened when Kirstie resented his curiosity at breakfast, and that same afternoon there occurred another scene which clinched the business. He was fishing Swingleburn, Archie accompanying him, when the latter looked at his watch.

"Well, good-bye," said he. "I have something to do. See you at dinner."

"Don't be in such a hurry," cries Frank. "Hold on till I get my rod up. I'll go with you; I'm sick of flogging this ditch."

And he began to reel up his line.

Archie stood speechless. He took a long while to recover his wits under this direct attack; but by the time he was ready with his answer, and the angle was almost packed up, he had become completely Weir, and the hanging face gloomed on his young shoulders. He spoke with a laboured composure, a laboured kindness even; but a child could see that his mind was made up.

"I beg your pardon, Innes; I don't want to be disagreeable, but let us understand one another from the beginning. When I want your company, I'll let you know."

"Oh!" cries Frank, "you don't want my company, don't you?"

"Apparently not just now," replied Archie. "I even indicated to you when I did, if you'll remember — and that was at dinner. If we two fellows are to live together pleasantly — and I see no reason why we should not — it can only be by respecting each other's privacy. If we begin intruding — "

"Oh, come! I'll take this at no man's hands. Is this the way you treat a guest and an old friend?" cried Innes.

"Just go home and think over what I said by yourself," continued Archie, "whether it's reasonable, or whether it's really offensive or not; and let's meet at dinner as though nothing had happened. I'll put it this way, if you like — that I know my own character, that I'm looking forward (with great pleasure, I assure you) to a long visit from you, and that I'm taking precautions at the first. I see the thing that we — that I, if you like — might fall out upon, and I step in and *obsto principiis*. I wager you five pounds you'll end by seeing

that I mean friendliness, and I assure you, Francie, I do," he added, relenting.

Bursting with anger, but incapable of speech, Innes shouldered his rod, made a gesture of farewell, and strode off down the burnside. Archie watched him go without moving. He was sorry, but quite unashamed. He hated to be inhospitable, but in one thing he was his father's son. He had a strong sense that his house was his own and no man else's; and to lie at a guest's mercy was what he refused. He hated to seem harsh. But that was Frank's look-out. If Frank had been commonly discreet, he would have been decently courteous. And there was another consideration. The secret he was protecting was not his own merely; it was hers; it belonged to that inexpressible she who was fast taking possession of his soul, and whom he would soon have defended at the cost of burning cities. By the time he had watched Frank as far as the Swingleburnfoot, appearing and disappearing in the tarnished heather, still stalking at a fierce gait but already dwindled in the distance into less than the smallness of Lilliput, he could afford to smile at the occurrence. Either Frank would go, and that would be a relief — or he would continue to stay, and his host must continue to endure him. And Archie was now free — by devious paths, behind hillocks and in the hollow of burns — to make for the trysting-place where Kirstie, cried about by the curlew and the plover, waited and burned for his coming by the Covenanter's stone.

Innes went off down-hill in a passion of resentment, easy to be understood, but which yielded progressively to the needs of his situation. He cursed Archie for a

cold-hearted, unfriendly, rude dog; and himself still more passionately for a fool in having come to Hermiston when he might have sought refuge in almost any other house in Scotland, but the step once taken was practically irretrievable. He had no more ready money to go anywhere else; he would have to borrow from Archie the next club-night; and ill as he thought of his host's manners, he was sure of his practical generosity. Frank's resemblance to Talleyrand strikes me as imaginary; but at least not Talleyrand himself could have more obediently taken his lesson from the facts. He met Archie at dinner without resentment, almost with cordiality. You must take your friends as you find them, he would have said. Archie couldn't help being his father's son, or his grandfather's, the hypothetical weaver's, grandson. The son of a hunks, he was still a hunks at heart, incapable of true generosity and consideration; but he had other qualities with which Frank could divert himself in the meanwhile, and to enjoy which it was necessary that Frank should keep his temper.

So excellently was it controlled that he awoke next morning with his head full of a different, though a cognate subject. What was Archie's little game? Why did he shun Frank's company? What was he keeping secret? Was he keeping tryst with somebody, and was it a woman? It would be a good joke and a fair revenge to discover. To that task he set himself with a great deal of patience, which might have surprised his friends, for he had been always credited not with patience so much as brilliancy; and little by little, from one point to another, he at last succeeded in piecing out

the situation. First he remarked that, although Archie set out in all the directions of the compass, he always came home again from some point between the south and west. From the study of a map, and in consideration of the great expanse of untenanted moorland running in that direction towards the sources of the Clyde, he laid his finger on Cauldstaneslap and two other neighbouring farms, Kingsmuirs and Polintarf. But it was difficult to advance farther. With his rod for a pretext, he vainly visited each of them in turn; nothing was to be seen suspicious about this trinity of moorland settlements. He would have tried to follow Archie, had it been the least possible, but the nature of the land precluded the idea. He did the next best, ensconced himself in a quiet corner, and pursued his movements with a telescope. It was equally in vain, and he soon wearied of his futile vigilance, left the telescope at home, and had almost given the matter up in despair, when, on the twenty-seventh day of his visit, he was suddenly confronted with the person whom he sought. The first Sunday Kirstie had managed to stay away from kirk on some pretext of indisposition, which was more truly modesty; the pleasure of beholding Archie seeming too sacred, too vivid for that public place. On the two following Frank had himself been absent on some of his excursions among the neighbouring families. It was not until the fourth, accordingly, that Frank had occasion to set eyes on the enchantress. With the first look, all hesitation was over. She came with the Cauldstaneslap party; then she lived at Cauldstaneslap. Here was Archie's secret, here was the woman, and more than that — though I have need here of every

manageable attenuation of language — with the first look, he had already entered himself as rival. It was a good deal in pique, it was a little in revenge, it was much in genuine admiration: the devil may decide the proportions; I cannot, and it is very likely that Frank could not.

"Mighty attractive milkmaid," he observed, on the way home.

"Who?" said Archie.

"O, the girl you're looking at — aren't you? Forward there on the road. She came attended by the rustic bard; presumably, therefore, belongs to his exalted family. The single objection! for the four black brothers are awkward customers. If anything were to go wrong, Gib would gibber, and Clem would prove inclement; and Dand fly in danders, and Hob blow up in gobbets. It would be a Helliott of a business!"

"Very humorous, I am sure," said Archie.

"Well, I am trying to be so," said Frank. "It's none too easy in this place, and with your solemn society, my dear fellow. But confess that the milkmaid has found favour in your eyes or resign all claim to be a man of taste."

"It is no matter," returned Archie.

But the other continued to look at him, steadily and quizzically, and his colour slowly rose and deepened under the glance, until not impudence itself could have denied that he was blushing. And at this Archie lost some of his control. He changed his stick from one hand to the other, and — "O, for God's sake, don't be an ass!" he cried.

"Ass? That's the retort delicate without doubt,"

says Frank. "Beware of the homespun brothers, dear. If they come into the dance, you'll see who's an ass. Think now, if they only applied (say) a quarter as much talent as I have applied to the question of what Mr. Archie does with his evening hours, and why he is so unaffectedly nasty when the subject's touched on—"

"You are touching on it now," interrupted Archie with a wince.

"Thank you. That was all I wanted, an articulate confession," said Frank.

"I beg to remind you—" began Archie.

But he was interrupted in turn. "My dear fellow, don't. It's quite needless. The subject's dead and buried."

And Frank began to talk hastily on other matters, an art in which he was an adept, for it was his gift to be fluent on anything or nothing. But although Archie had the grace or the timidity to suffer him to rattle on, he was by no means done with the subject. When he came home to dinner, he was greeted with a sly demand, how things were looking "Cauldstaneslap ways." Frank took his first glass of port out after dinner to the toast of Kirstie, and later in the evening he returned to the charge again.

"I say, Weir, you'll excuse me for returning again to this affair. I've been thinking it over, and I wish to beg you very seriously to be more careful. It's not a safe business. Not safe, my boy," said he.

"What?" said Archie.

"Well, it's your own fault if I must put a name on the thing; but really, as a friend, I cannot stand by and see you rushing head down into these dangers. My

dear boy," said he, holding up a warning cigar, "consider what is to be the end of it?"

"The end of what?" — Archie, helpless with irritation, persisted in this dangerous and ungracious guard.

"Well, the end of the milkmaid; or, to speak more by the card, the end of Miss Christina Elliott of the Cauldstaneslap?"

"I assure you," Archie broke out, "this is all a figment of your imagination. There is nothing to be said against that young lady; you have no right to introduce her name into the conversation."

"I'll make a note of it," said Frank. "She shall henceforth be nameless, nameless, nameless, Grigalach! I make a note besides of your valuable testimony to her character. I only want to look at this thing as a man of the world. Admitted she's an angel — but, my good fellow, is she a lady?"

This was torture to Archie. "I beg your pardon," he said, struggling to be composed, "but because you have wormed yourself into my confidence —"

"O, come!" cried Frank. "Your confidence? It was rosy but unconsenting. Your confidence, indeed? Now, look! This is what I must say, Weir, for it concerns your safety and good character, and therefore my honour as your friend. You say I wormed myself into your confidence. Wormed is good. But what have I done? I have put two and two together, just as the parish will be doing to-morrow, and the whole of Tweeddale in two weeks, and the black brothers — well, I won't put a date on that; it will be a dark and stormy morning. Your secret, in other words, is poor

Poll's. And I want to ask of you as a friend whether you like the prospect? There are two horns to your dilemma, and I must say for myself I should look mighty ruefully on either. Do you see yourself explaining to the Four Black Brothers? or do you see yourself presenting the milkmaid to papa as the future lady of Hermiston? Do you? I tell you plainly, I don't."

Archie rose. "I will hear no more of this," he said in a trembling voice.

But Frank again held up his cigar. "Tell me one thing first. Tell me if this is not a friend's part that I am playing?"

"I believe you think it so," replied Archie. "I can go as far as that. I can do so much justice to your motives. But I will hear no more of it. I am going to bed."

"That's right, Weir," said Frank, heartily. "Go to bed and think over it; and, I say, man, don't forget your prayers! I don't often do the moral — don't go in for that sort of thing — but when I do there's one thing sure, that I mean it."

So Archie marched off to bed, and Frank sat alone by the table for another hour or so, smiling to himself richly. There was nothing vindictive in his nature; but, if revenge came in his way, it might as well be good, and the thought of Archie's pillow reflections that night was indescribably sweet to him. He felt a pleasant sense of power. He looked down on Archie as on a very little boy whose strings he pulled — as on a horse whom he had backed and bridled by sheer power of intelligence, and whom he might ride to glory or the grave

at pleasure. Which was it to be? He lingered long, relishing the details of schemes that he was too idle to pursue. Poor cork upon a torrent, he tasted that night the sweets of omnipotence, and brooded like a deity over the strands of that intrigue which was to shatter him before the summer waned.

CHAPTER VIII

A NOCTURNAL VISIT

KIRSTIE had many causes of distress. More and more as we grow old — and yet more and more as we grow old and are women, frozen by the fear of age — we come to rely on the voice as the single outlet of the soul. Only thus, in the curtailment of our means, can we relieve the straitened cry of the passion within us; only thus, in the bitter and sensitive shyness of advancing years, can we maintain relations with those vivacious figures of the young that still show before us, and tend daily to become no more than the moving wall-paper of life. Talk is the last link, the last relation. But with the end of the conversation, when the voice stops and the bright face of the listener is turned away, solitude falls again on the bruised heart. Kirstie had lost her "cannie hour at e'en"; she could no more wander with Archie, a ghost, if you will, but a happy ghost, in fields Elysian. And to her it was as if the whole world had fallen silent; to him, but an unremarkable change of amusements. And she raged to know it. The effervescency of her passionate and irritable nature rose within her at times to bursting point.

This is the price paid by age for unseasonable ardours of feeling. It must have been so for Kirstie at any time when the occasion chanced; but it so fell out that she

was deprived of this delight in the hour when she had most need of it, when she had most to say, most to ask, and when she trembled to recognize her sovereignty not merely in abeyance but annulled. For, with the clairvoyance of a genuine love, she had pierced the mystery that had so long embarrassed Frank. She was conscious, even before it was carried out, even on that Sunday night when it began, of an invasion of her rights; and a voice told her the invader's name. Since then, by arts, by accident, by small things observed, and by the general drift of Archie's humor, she had passed beyond all possibility of doubt. With a sense of justice that Lord Hermiston might have envied, she had that day in church considered and admitted the attractions of the younger Kirstie; and with the profound humanity and sentimentality of her nature, she had recognized the coming of fate. Not thus would she have chosen. She had seen, in imagination, Archie wedded to some tall, powerful, and rosy heroine of the golden locks, made in her own image, for whom she would have strewed the bride-bed with delight; and now she could have wept to see the ambition falsified. But the gods had pronounced, and her doom was otherwise.

She lay tossing in bed that night, besieged with feverish thoughts. There were dangerous matters pending, a battle was toward, over the fate of which she hung in jealousy, sympathy, fear, and alternate loyalty and disloyalty to either side. Now she was re-incarnated in her niece, and now in Archie. Now she saw, through the girl's eyes, the youth on his knees to her, heard his persuasive instances with a deadly weakness, and received his over-mastering caresses. Anon, with a re-

vulsion, her temper raged to see such utmost favours of fortune and love squandered on a brat of a girl, one of her own house, using her own name — a deadly ingredient — and that "didnae ken her ain mind an' was as black's your hat." Now she trembled lest her deity should plead in vain, loving the idea of success for him like a triumph of nature; anon, with returning loyalty to her own family and sex, she trembled for Kirstie and the credit of the Elliotts. And again she had a vision of herself, the day over for her old-world tales and local gossip, bidding farewell to her last link with life and brightness and love; and behind and beyond, she saw but the blank butt-end where she must crawl to die. Had she then come to the lees? she, so great, so beautiful, with a heart as fresh as a girl's and strong as womanhood? It could not be, and yet it was so; and for a moment her bed was horrible to her as the sides of the grave. And she looked forward over a waste of hours, and saw herself go on to rage, and tremble, and be softened, and rage again, until the day came and the labours of the day must be renewed.

Suddenly she heard feet on the stairs — his feet, and soon after the sound of a window-sash flung open. She sat up with her heart beating. He had gone to his room alone, and he had not gone to bed. She might again have one of her night cracks; and at the entrancing prospect, a change came over her mind; with the approach of this hope of pleasure, all the baser metal became immediately obliterated from her thoughts. She rose, all woman, and all the best of woman, tender, pitiful, hating the wrong, loyal to her own sex — and all the weakest of that dear miscellany, nourishing,

cherishing next her soft heart, voicelessly flattering, hopes that she would have died sooner than have acknowledged. She tore off her nightcap, and her hair fell about her shoulders in profusion. Undying coquetry awoke. By the faint light of her nocturnal rush, she stood before the looking-glass, carried her shapely arms above her head, and gathered up the treasures of her tresses. She was never backward to admire herself; that kind of modesty was a stranger to her nature; and she paused, struck with a pleased wonder at the sight. "Ye daft auld wife!" she said, answering a thought that was not; and she blushed with the innocent consciousness of a child. Hastily she did up the massive and shining coils, hastily donned a wrapper, and with the rush-light in her hand, stole into the hall. Below stairs she heard the clock ticking the deliberate seconds, and Frank jingling with the decanters in the dining-room. Aversion rose in her, bitter and momentary. "Nesty, tippling puggy!" she thought; and the next moment she had knocked guardedly at Archie's door and was bidden enter.

Archie had been looking out into the ancient blackness, pierced here and there with a rayless star; taking the sweet air of the moors and the night into his bosom deeply; seeking, perhaps finding, peace after the manner of the unhappy. He turned round as she came in, and showed her a pale face against the window-frame.

"Is that you, Kirstie?" he asked. "Come in!"

"It's unco late, my dear," said Kirstie, affecting unwillingness.

"No, no," he answered, "not at all. Come in, if you want a crack. I am not sleepy, God knows."

She advanced, took a chair by the toilet table and the candle, and set the rush-light at her foot. Something — it might be in the comparative disorder of her dress, it might be the emotion that now welled in her bosom — had touched her with a wand of transformation, and she seemed young with the youth of goddesses.

"Mr. Erchie," she began, "what's this that's come to ye?"

"I am not aware of anything that has come," said Archie, and blushed and repented bitterly that he had let her in.

"Oh, my dear, that'll no dae!" said Kirstie. "It's ill to blind the eyes of love. Oh, Mr. Erchie, tak' a thocht ere it's ower late. Ye shouldnae be impatient o' the braws o' life, they'll a' come in their saison, like the sun and the rain. Ye're young yet; ye've mony cantie years afore ye. See and dinnae wreck yersel at the outset like sae mony ithers! Hae patience — they telled me aye that was the owercome o' life — hae patience, there's a braw day coming yet. Gude kens it never cam to me; and here I am wi' nayther man nor bairn to ca' my ain, wearying a' folks wi' my ill tongue, and you just the first, Mr. Erchie?"

"I have a difficulty in knowing what you mean," said Archie.

"Weel, and I'll tell ye," she said. "It's just this, that I'm feared. I'm feared for ye, my dear. Remember, your faither is a hard man, reaping where he hasnae sowed and gaithering where he hasnae strawed. It's easy speakin', but mind! Ye'll have to look in the gurly face o'm, where it's ill to look, and vain to look for mercy. Ye mind me o' a bonny ship pitten oot into

the black and gowsty seas — ye're a' safe still sittin' quait and crackin' wi' Kirstie in your lown chalmer; but whaur will ye be the morn, and in whatten horror o' the fearsome tempest, cryin' on the hills to cover ye?"

"Why, Kirstie, you're very enigmatical to-night — and very eloquent," Archie put in.

"And, my dear Mr. Erchie," she continued, with a change of voice, "ye mauna think that I canna sympathise wi' ye. Ye mauna think that I havena been young mysel'. Langsyne, when I was a bit lassie, no twenty yet —" She paused and sighed. "Clean and caller, wi' a fit like the hinney bee," she continued. "I was aye big and buirdly, ye maun understand; a bonny figure o' a woman, though I say it that suldna — built to rear bairns — braw bairns they suld hae been, and grand I would hae likit it! But I was young, dear, wi' the bonny glint o' youth in my e'en, and little I dreamed I'd ever be tellin' ye this, an auld, lanely, rudas wife! Weel, Mr. Erchie, there was a lad cam' courtin' me, as was but naetural. Mony had come before, and I would nane o' them. But this yin had a tongue to wile the birds frae the lift and the bees frae the fox-glove bells. Deary me, but it's lang syne. Folk have deed sinsyne and been buried, and are forgotten, and bairns been born and got merrit and got bairns o' their ain. Sinsyne woods have been plantit, and have grawn up and are bonny trees, and the joes sit in their shadow, and sinsyne auld estates have changed hands, and there have been wars and rumours of wars on the face of the earth. And here I'm still — like an auld droopit craw — lookin' on and craikin'? But, Mr.

Erchie, do ye no think that I have mind o' it a' still? I was dwalling then in my faither's house; and it's a curious thing that we were whiles trysted in the Deil's Hags. And do ye no think that I have mind of the bonny simmer days, the lang miles, o' the bluid-red heather, the cryin' o' the whaups, and the lad and the lassie that was trysted? Do ye no think that I mind how the hilly sweetness ran about my hairt. Ay, Mr. Erchie, I ken the way o' it — fine do I ken the way — how the grace o' God takes them like Paul of Tarsus, when they think o' it least, and drives the pair o' them into a land which is like a dream, and the world and the folks in't are nae mair than clouds to the puir lassie, and Heeven nae mair than windle-straes, if she can but pleesure him! Until Tam deed — that was my story," she broke off to say, "he deed, and I wasna at the buryin'. But while he was here, I could take care o' mysel'. And can yon puir lassie?"

Kirstie, her eyes shining with unshed tears, stretched out her hand towards him appealingly; the bright and the dull gold of her hair flashed and smouldered in the coils behind her comely head, like the rays of an eternal youth; the pure colour had risen in her face; and Archie was abashed alike by her beauty and her story. He came towards her slowly from the window, took up her hand in his and kissed it.

"Kirstie," he said hoarsely, "you have misjudged me sorely. I have always thought of her, I wouldna harm her for the universe, my woman."

"Eh, lad, and that's easy sayin'," cried Kirstie, "but it's nane sae easy doin! Man, do ye no comprehend that it's God's wull we should be blendit and glamoured,

and have nae command over our ain members at a time like that? My bairn," she cried, still holding his hand, "think o' the puir lass! have pity upon her, Erchie! and O, be wise for twa! Think o' the risk she rins! I have seen ye, and what's to prevent ithers? I saw ye once in the Hags, in my ain howl, and I was wae to see ye there — in pairt for the omen, for I think there's a weird on the place — and in pairt for puir nakit envy and bitterness o' hairt. It's strange ye should forgather there tae! God! but yon puir, thrawn, auld Covenanter's seen a heap o' human natur since he lookit his last on the musket barrels, if he never saw nane afore," she added with a kind of wonder in her eyes.

"I swear by my honour I have done her no wrong," said Archie. "I swear by my honour and the redemption of my soul that there shall none be done her. I have heard of this before. I have been foolish, Kirstie, not unkind and, above all, not base."

"There's my bairn!" said Kirstie, rising. "I'll can trust ye noo, I'll can gang to my bed wi' an easy hairt." And then she saw in a flash how barren had been her triumph. Archie had promised to spare the girl, and he would keep it; but who had promised to spare Archie? What was to be the end of it? Over a maze of difficulties she glanced, and saw, at the end of every passage, the flinty countenance of Hermiston. And a kind of horror fell upon her at what she had done. She wore a tragic mask. "Erchie, the Lord peety you, dear, and peety me! I have buildit on this foundation," — laying her hand heavily on his shoulder — "and buildit hie, and pit my hairt in the buildin' of it. If the hale hypothec were to fa', I think, laddie, I would dee! Excuse a daft wife

that loves ye, and that kenned your mither. And for His name's sake keep yersel' frae inordinate desires; haud your heart in baith your hands, carry it canny and laigh; dinna send it up like a bairn's kite into the collies-hangie o' the wunds? Mind, Maister Erchie dear, that this life's a disappointment, and a mouthfu' o' mools is the appointed end."

"Ay, but Kirstie, my woman, you're asking me ower much at last," said Archie, profoundly moved, and lapsing into the broad Scots. "Ye're asking what nae man can grant ye, what only the Lord of heaven can grant ye if He see fit. Ay! And can even he? I can promise ye what I shall do, and you can depend on that. But how I shall feel — my woman, that is long past thinking of!"

They were both standing by now opposite each other. The face of Archie wore the wretched semblance of a smile; hers was convulsed for a moment.

"Promise me ae thing," she cried, in a sharp voice. "Promise me ye'll never do naething without telling me."

"No, Kirstie, I canna promise ye that," he replied. "I have promised enough, God kens!"

"May the blessing of God lift and rest upon ye, dear!" she said.

"God bless ye, my old friend," said he.

CHAPTER IX

AT THE WEAVER'S STONE

It was late in the afternoon when Archie drew near by the hill path to the Praying Weaver's stone. The Hags were in shadow. But still, through the gate of the Slap, the sun shot a last arrow, which spead far and straight across the surface of the moss, here and there touching and shining on a tussock, and lighted at length on the gravestone and the small figure awaiting him there. The emptiness and solitude of the great moors seemed to be concentred there, and Kirstie pointed out by that figure of sunshine for the only inhabitant. His first sight of her was thus excruciatingly sad, like a glimpse of a world from which all light, comfort, and society were on the point of vanishing. And the next moment, when she had turned her face to him and the quick smile had enlightened it, the whole face of nature smiled upon him in her smile of welcome. Archie's slow pace was quickened; his legs hasted to her though his heart was hanging back. The girl, upon her side, drew herself together slowly and stood up, expectant; she was all languor, her face was gone white; her arms ached for him, her soul was on tip-toes. But he deceived her, pausing a few steps away, not less white than herself, and holding up his hand with a gesture of denial.

"No, Christina, not to-day," he said. "To-day I have to talk to you seriously. Sit ye down, please, there where you were. Please!" he repeated.

The revulsion of feeling in Christina's heart was violent. To have longed and waited these weary hours for him, rehearsing her endearments — to have seen him at last come — to have been ready there, breathless, wholly passive, his to do what he would with — and suddenly to have found herself confronted with a grey-faced, harsh schoolmaster — it was too rude a shock. She could have wept, but pride withheld her. She sat down on the stone, from which she had arisen, part with the instinct of obedience, part as though she had been thrust there. What was this? Why was she rejected? Had she ceased to please? She stood here offering her wares, and he would none of them! And yet they were all his! His to take and keep, not his to refuse though! In her quick petulant nature, a moment ago on fire with hope, thwarted love and wounded vanity wrought. The schoolmaster that there is in all men, to the despair of all girls and most women, was now completely in possession of Archie. He had passed a night of sermons; a day of reflection; he had come wound up to do his duty; and the set mouth, which in him only betrayed the effort of his will, to her seemed the expression of an averted heart. It was the same with his constrained voice and embarrassed utterance; and if so — if it was all over — the pang of the thought took away from her the power of thinking.

He stood before her some way off. "Kirstie, there's been too much of this. We've seen too much of each other." She looked up quickly and her eyes contracted.

"There's no good ever comes of these secret meetings. They're not frank, not honest truly, and I ought to have seen it. People have begun to talk; and it's not right of me. Do you see?"

"I see somebody will have been talking to ye," she said sullenly.

"They have, more than one of them," replied Archie.

"And whae were they?" she cried. "And what kind o' love do ye ca' that, that's ready to gang round like a whirligig at folk talking? Do ye think they havena talked to me?"

"Have they indeed?" said Archie, with a quick breath. "That is what I feared. Who were they? Who has dared——"

Archie was on the point of losing his temper.

As a matter of fact, not any one had talked to Christina on the matter; and she strenuously repeated her own first question in a panic of self-defence.

"Ah, well! what does it matter?" he said. "They were good folk that wished well to us, and the great affair is that there are people talking. My dear girl, we have to be wise. We must not wreck our lives at the outset. They may be long and happy yet, and we must see to it, Kirstie, like God's rational creatures and not like fool children. There is one thing we must see to before all. You're worth waiting for, Kirstie! worth waiting for a generation; it would be enough reward."—And here he remembered the schoolmaster again, and very unwisely took to following wisdom. "The first thing that we must see to, is that there shall be no scandal about for my father's sake. That would ruin all; do ye no see that?"

Kirstie was a little pleased, there had been some show of warmth of sentiment in what Archie had said last. But the dull irritation still persisted in her bosom; with the aboriginal instinct, having suffered herself, she wished to make Archie suffer.

And besides, there had come out the word she had always feared to hear from his lips, the name of his father. It is not to be supposed that, during so many days with a love avowed between them, some reference had not been made to their conjoint future. It had in fact been often touched upon, and from the first had been the sore point. Kirstie had wilfully closed the eye of thought; she would not argue even with herself; gallant, desperate little heart, she had accepted the command of that supreme attraction like the call of fate and marched blindfold on her doom. But Archie, with his masculine sense of responsibility, must reason; he must dwell on some future good, when the present good was all in all to Kirstie; he must talk — and talk lamely, as necessity drove him — of what was to be. Again and again he had touched on marriage; again and again been driven back into indistinctness by a memory of Lord Hermiston. And Kirstie had been swift to understand and quick to choke down and smother the understanding; swift to leap up in flame at a mention of that hope, which spoke volumes to her vanity and her love, that she might one day be Mrs. Weir of Hermiston; swift, also, to recognise in his stumbling or throttled utterance the death-knell of these expectations, and constant, poor girl! in her large-minded madness, to go on and to reck nothing of the future. But these unfinished references, these blinks in

which his heart spoke, and his memory and reason rose up to silence it before the words were well uttered, gave her unqualifiable agony. She was raised up and dashed down again bleeding. The recurrence of the subject forced her, for however short a time, to open her eyes on what she did not wish to see; and it had invariably ended in another disappointment. So now again, at the mere wind of its coming, at the mere mention of his father's name — who might seem indeed to have accompanied them in their whole moorland courtship, an awful figure in a wig with an ironical and bitter smile, present to guilty consciousness — she fled from it head down.

"Ye havena told me yet," she said, "who was it spoke?"

"Your aunt for one," said Archie.

"Auntie Kirstie?" she cried. "And what do I care for my Auntie Kirstie?"

"She cares a great deal for her niece," replied Archie, in kind reproof.

"Troth, and it's the first I've heard of it," retorted the girl.

"The question here is not who it is, but what they say, what they have noticed," pursued the lucid schoolmaster. "That is what we have to think of in self-defence."

"Auntie Kirstie, indeed! A bitter, thrawn auld maid that's fomented trouble in the country before I was born, and will be doing it still, I daur say, when I'm deid! It's in her nature; it's as natural for her as it's for a sheep to eat."

"Pardon me, Kirstie, she was not the only one," interposed Archie. "I had two warnings, two sermons, last night, both most kind and considerate. Had you been there, I promise you you would have grat, my dear! And they opened my eyes. I saw we were going a wrong way."

"Who was the other one?" Kirstie demanded.

By this time Archie was in the condition of a hunted beast. He had come, braced and resolute; he was to trace out a line of conduct for the pair of them in a few cold, convincing sentences; he had now been there some time, and he was still staggering round the outworks and undergoing what he felt to be a savage cross-examination.

"Mr. Frank!" she cried. "What nex', I would like to ken?"

"He spoke most kindly and truly."

"What like did he say?"

"I am not going to tell you; you have nothing to do with that," cried Archie, startled to find he had admitted so much.

"O, I have naething to do with it!" she repeated, springing to her feet. "A'body at Hermiston's free to pass their opinions upon me, but I have naething to do wi' it! Was this at prayers like? Did ye ca' the grieve into the consultation? Little wonder if a'body's talking, when ye make a'body ye're confidants! But as you say, Mr. Weir,—most kindly, most considerately, most truly, I'm sure,—I have naething to do with it. And I think I'll better be going. I'll be wishing you good evening, Mr. Weir." And she made him a stately

curtsey, shaking as she did so from head to foot, with the barren ecstasy of temper.

Poor Archie stood dumfounded. She had moved some steps away from him before he recovered the gift of articulate speech.

"Kirstie!" he cried. "O, Kirstie woman!"

There was in his voice a ring of appeal, a clang of mere astonishment that showed the schoolmaster was vanquished.

She turned round on him. "What do ye Kirstie me for?" she retorted. "What have ye to do wi' me? Gang to your ain freends and deave them!"

He could only repeat the appealing "Kirstie!"

"Kirstie, indeed!" cried the girl, her eyes blazing in her white face. "My name is Miss Christina Elliott, I would have ye to ken, and I daur ye to ca' me out of it. If I canna get love, I'll have respect, Mr. Weir. I'm come of decent people, and I'll have respect. What have I done that ye should lightly me? What have I done? What have I done? O, what have I done?" and her voice rose upon the third repetition. "I thocht —I thocht—I thocht I was sae happy!" and the first sob broke from her like the paroxysm of some mortal sickness.

Archie ran to her. He took the poor child in his arms, and she nestled to his breast as to a mother's, and clasped him in hands that were strong like vices. He felt her whole body shaken by the throes of distress, and had pity upon her beyond speech. Pity, and at the same time a bewildered fear of this explosive engine in his arms, whose works he did not understand, and yet had been tampering with. There arose from before

him the curtains of boyhood, and he saw for the first time the ambiguous face of woman as she is. In vain he looked back over the interview; he saw not where he had offended. It seemed unprovoked, a wilful convulsion of brute nature. . . .

EDITORIAL NOTE

With the words last printed, "a wilful convulsion of brute nature," the romance of *Weir of Hermiston* breaks off. They were dictated, I believe, on the very morning of the writer's sudden seizure and death. *Weir of Hermiston* thus remains in the work of Stevenson what *Edwin Drood* is in the work of Dickens or *Denis Duval* in that of Thackeray: or rather it remains relatively more, for if each of those fragments holds an honourable place among its author's writings, among Stevenson's the fragment of *Weir* holds certainly the highest.

Readers may be divided in opinion on the question whether they would or they would not wish to hear more of the intended course of the story and destinies of the characters. To some, silence may seem best, and that the mind should be left to its own conjectures as to the sequel, with the help of such indications as the text affords. I confess that this is the view which has my sympathy. But since others, and those almost certainly a majority, are anxious to be told all they can, and since editors and publishers join in the request, I can scarce do otherwise than comply. The intended argument, then, so far as it was known at the time of the writer's death to his step-daughter and devoted amanuensis, Mrs. Strong, was nearly as follows:—

Archie persists in his good resolution of avoiding further conduct compromising to young Kirstie's good name. Taking advantage of the situation thus created, and of the girl's unhappiness and wounded vanity, Frank Innes pursues his purpose of seduction; and Kirstie, though still caring for Archie in her heart, allows herself to become Frank's victim. Old Kirstie is the first to perceive something amiss with her, and believing Archie to be the culprit, accuses him, thus making him aware for the first time that mischief has happened. He does not at once deny the charge, but seeks out and questions young Kirstie, who confesses the truth to him; and he, still loving her, promises to protect and defend her in her trouble. He then has an inter-

view with Frank Innes on the moor, which ends in a quarrel, and in Archie killing Frank beside the Weaver's Stone. Meanwhile the Four Black Brothers, having become aware of their sister's betrayal, are bent on vengeance against Archie as her supposed seducer. They are about to close in upon him with this purpose, when he is arrested by the officers of the law for the murder of Frank. He is tried before his own father, the Lord Justice-Clerk, found guilty, and condemned to death. Meanwhile the elder Kirstie, having discovered from the girl how matters really stand, informs her nephews of the truth: and they, in a great revulsion of feeling in Archie's favour, determine on an action after the ancient manner of their house. They gather a following, and after a great fight break the prison where Archie lies confined, and rescue him. He and young Kirstie thereafter escape to America. But the ordeal of taking part in the trial of his own son has been too much for the Lord Justice-Clerk, who dies of the shock. "I do not know," adds the amanuensis, "what becomes of old Kirstie, but that character grew and strengthened so in the writing that I am sure he had some dramatic destiny for her."

The plan of every imaginative work is subject, of course, to change under the artist's hand as he carries it out; and not merely the character of the elder Kirstie, but other elements of the design no less, might well have deviated from the lines originally traced. It seems certain, however, that the next stage in the relations of Archie and the younger Kirstie would have been as above foreshadowed; this conception of the lover's unconventional chivalry and unshaken devotion to his mistress after her fault is very characteristic of the author's mind. The vengeance to be taken on the seducer beside the Weaver's Stone is prepared for in the first words of the Introduction: while the situation and fate of the judge, confronting like a Brutus, but unable to survive, the duty of sending his own son to the gallows, seems clearly to have been destined to furnish the climax and essential tragedy of the tale. How this circumstance was to have been brought about within the limits of legal usage and social possibility, seems hard to conjecture; but it was a point to which the author had evidently given careful consideration. Mrs. Strong says simply that the Lord Justice-Clerk, like an old Roman, condemns his son to death; but I am assured on the best legal authority of Scotland, that no judge, however powerful

either by character or office, could have insisted on presiding at the trial of a near kinsman of his own. The Lord Justice-Clerk was head of the criminal justiciary of the country; he might have insisted on his right of being present on the bench when his son was tried; but he would never have been allowed to preside or to pass sentence. Now in a letter of Stevenson's to Mr. Baxter, of October 1892, I find him asking for materials in terms which seem to indicate that he knew this quite well:—"I wish Pitcairn's 'Criminal Trials,' *quam primum.* Also an absolutely correct text of the Scots judiciary oath. Also, in case Pitcairn does not come down late enough, I wish as full a report as possible of a Scots murder trial between 1790-1820. Understand, *the fullest possible.* Is there any book which would guide me to the following facts? The Justice-Clerk tries some people capitally on circuit. Certain evidence cropping up, the charge is transferred to the Justice-Clerk's own son. Of course in the next trial the Justice-Clerk is excluded, and the case is called before the Lord Justice-General. Where would this trial have to be? I fear in Edinburgh, which would not suit my view. Could it be again at the circuit town?" The point was referred to a quondam fellow-member with Stevenson of the Edinburgh Speculative Society, Mr. Graham Murray, the present Solicitor-General for Scotland; whose reply was to the effect that there would be no difficulty in making the new trial take place at the circuit town: that it would have to be held there in spring or autumn, before two Lords of Justiciary; and that the Lord Justice-General would have nothing to do with it, this title being at the date in question only a nominal one held by a layman (which is no longer the case). On this Stevenson writes, "Graham Murray's note *re* the venue was highly satisfactory, and did me all the good in the world." The terms of his inquiry seem to imply that he intended other persons, before Archie, to have fallen first under suspicion of the murder; and also — doubtless in order to make the rescue by the Black Brothers possible — that he wanted Archie to be imprisoned not in Edinburgh but in the circuit town. But they do not show how he meant to get over the main difficulty, which at the same time he fully recognises. Can it have been that Lord Hermiston's part was to have been limited to presiding at the *first* trial, where the evidence incriminating Archie was unexpectedly brought forward, and to directing that the law should take its course?

Whether the final escape and union of Archie and Christina would

have proved equally essential to the plot may perhaps to some readers seem questionable. They may rather feel that a tragic destiny is foreshadowed from the beginning for all concerned, and is inherent in the very conditions of the tale. But on this point, and other matters of general criticism connected with it, I find an interesting discussion by the author himself in his correspondence. Writing to Mr. J. M. Barrie, under date November 1, 1892, and criticising that author's famous story, of *The Little Minister*, Stevenson says: —

"Your descriptions of your dealings with Lord Rintoul are frightfully unconscientious. . . . The Little Minister ought to have ended badly; we all know it *did*, and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you have lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end, though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now, your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that, your honour was committed — at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on *Richard Feverel* for instance, that it begins to end well; and then tricks you and ends ill. But in this case, there is worse behind, for the ill ending does not inherently issue from the plot — the story had, in fact, ended well after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy, — and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with a room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It might have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers. I have had a heavy case of conscience of the same kind about my Braxfield story. Braxfield — only his name is Hermiston — has a son who is condemned to death; plainly there is a fine tempting fitness about this — and I meant he was to hang. But on considering my minor characters, I saw there were five people who would — in a sense, who must — break prison and attempt his rescue. They are capable hardy folks too, who might very well succeed. Why should they not then? Why should not young Hermiston escape clear out of the country? and be happy, if he could, with his — but soft! I will not betray my secret nor my heroine. . . ."

To pass, now, from the question how the story would have ended to the question how it originated and grew in the writer's mind. The character of the hero, Weir of Hermiston, is avowedly suggested by the historical personalty of Robert Macqueen, Lord Braxfield. This famous judge has been for generations the subject of a hundred Edinburgh tales and anecdotes. Readers of Stevenson's essay on the Raeburn exhibition in *Virginibus Puerisque,* will remember how he is fascinated by Raeburn's portrait of Braxfield, even as Lockhart had been fascinated by a different portrait of the same worthy sixty years before (see *Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk*); nor did his interest in the character diminish in later life.

Again, the case of a judge involved by the exigencies of his office in a strong conflict between public duty and private interest or affection, was one which had always attracted and exercised Stevenson's imagination. In the days when he and Mr. Henley were collaborating with a view to the stage, Mr. Henley once proposed a plot founded on the story of Mr. Justice Harbottle in Sheridan Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly,* in which the wicked judge goes headlong *per fas et nefas* to his object of getting the husband of his mistress hanged. Some time later Stevenson and his wife together wrote a play called *The Hanging Judge.* In this, the title character is tempted for the first time in his life to tamper with the course of justice, in order to shield his wife from persecution by a former husband who reappears after being supposed dead. Bulwer's novel of *Paul Clifford*, with its final situation of the worldly-minded judge, Sir William Brandon, learning that the highwayman whom he is in the act of sentencing is his own son, and dying of the knowledge, was also well known to Stevenson, and no doubt counted for something in the suggestion of the present story.

Once more, the difficulties often attending the relation of father and son in actual life had pressed heavily on Stevenson's mind and conscience from the days of his youth, when in obeying the law of his own nature he had been constrained to disappoint, distress, and for a time to be much misunderstood by, a father whom he justly loved and admired with all his heart. Difficulties of this kind he had already handled in a lighter vein once or twice in fiction — as for instance in the *Story of a Lie* and in *The Wrecker* — before he grappled with them in the acute and tragic phase in which they occur in the present story.

These three elements, then, the interest of the historical personality

of Lord Braxfield, the problems and emotions arising from a violent conflict between duty and nature in a judge, and the difficulties due to incompatibility and misunderstanding between father and son, lie at the foundations of the present story. To touch on minor matters, it is perhaps worth notice, as Mr. Henley reminds me, that the name of Weir had from of old a special significance for Stevenson's imagination, from the traditional fame in Edinburgh of Major Weir, burned as a warlock, together with his sister, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. Another name, that of the episodical personage of Mr. Torrance the minister, is borrowed direct from life, as indeed are the whole figure and its surroundings — kirkyard, kirk, and manse — down even to the black thread mittens: witness the following passage from a letter of the early seventies: — "I've been to church and am not depressed — a great step. It was at that beautiful church [of Glencorse in the Pentlands, three miles from his father's country home at Swanston]. It is a little cruciform place, with a steep slate roof. The small kirkyard is full of old gravestones; one of a Frenchman from Dunkerque, I suppose he died prisoner in the military prison hard by. And one, the most pathetic memorial I ever saw: a poor school-slate, in a wooden frame, with the inscription cut into it evidently by the father's own hand. In church, old Mr. Torrance preached, over eighty and a relic of times forgotten, with his black thread gloves and mild old face." A side hint for a particular trait in the character of Mrs. Weir we can trace in some family traditions concerning the writer's own grandmother, who is reported to have valued piety much more than efficiency in her domestic servants. The other women characters seem, so far as his friends know, to have been pure creation, and especially that new and admirable incarnation of the eternal feminine in the elder Kirstie. The little that he says about her himself is in a letter written a few days before his death to Mr. Gosse. The allusions are to the various moods and attitudes of people in regard to middle age, and are suggested by Mr. Gosse's volume of poems, *In Russet and Silver*. "It seems rather funny," he writes, "that this matter should come up just now, as I am at present engaged in treating a severe case of middle age in one of my stories, *The Justice-Clerk*. The case is that of a woman, and I think I am doing her justice. You will be interested, I believe, to see the difference in our treatments. *Secreta Vitae* [the title of one of Mr. Gosse's poems] comes nearer to the case of my poor Kirstie." From the wonderful

midnight scene between her and Archie, we may judge what we have lost in those later scenes where she was to have taxed him with the fault that was not his — to have presently learned his innocence from the lips of his supposed victim — to have then vindicated him to her kinsmen and fired them to the action of his rescue. The scene of the prison-breaking here planned by Stevenson would have gained interest (as will already have occurred to readers) from comparison with the two famous precedents in Scott, the Porteous mob, and the breaking of Portanferry Jail.

The best account of Stevenson's methods of imaginative work is in the following sentences from a letter of his own to Mr. W. Craibe Angus of Glasgow: — "I am still a 'slow study,' and sit for a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method: macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in — and there your stuff is — good or bad." The several elements above noted having been left to work for many years in his mind, it was in the autumn of 1892 that he was moved to "take the lid off and look in," — under the influence, it would seem, of a special and overmastering wave of that feeling for the romance of Scottish scenery and character which was at all times so strong in him, and which his exile did so much to intensify. I quote again from his letter to Mr. Barrie on November 1 in that year: — "It is a singular thing that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabit the cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come. I have finished *David Balfour,* I have another book on the stocks, *The Young Chevalier,* which is to be part in France and part in Scotland, and to deal with Prince Charlie about the year 1749; and now what have I done but begun a third, which is to be all moorland together, and is to have for a centre-piece a figure that I think you will appreciate — that of the immortal Braxfield. Braxfield himself is my grand premier — or since you are so much involved in the British drama, let me say my heavy lead."

Writing to me at the same date he makes the same announcement more briefly, with a list of the characters and an indication of the scene and date of the story. To Mr. Baxter he writes a month later, "I have a novel on the stocks to be called *The Justice-Clerk.* It is pretty Scotch; the grand premier is taken from Braxfield (O, by the by, send

me Cockburn's *Memorials*), and some of the story is, well, queer. The heroine is seduced by one man, and finally disappears with the other man who shot him. . . . Mind you, I expect *The Justice-Clerk* to be my masterpiece. My Braxfield is already a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, and so far as he has gone far my best character." From the last extract it appears that he had already at this date drafted some of the earlier chapters of the book. He also about the same time composed the dedication to his wife, who found it pinned to her bed-curtains one morning on awaking. It was always his habit to keep several books in progress at the same time, turning from one to another as the fancy took him, and finding rest in the change of labour; and for many months after the date of this letter, first illness, — then a voyage to Auckland, — then work on the *Ebb-Tide,* on a new tale called *St. Ives,* which was begun during an attack of influenza, and on his projected book of family history, — prevented his making any continuous progress with *Weir.* In August 1893 he says he has been recasting the beginning. A year later, still only the first four or five chapters had been drafted. Then, in the last weeks of his life, he attacked the task again, in a sudden heat of inspiration, and worked at it ardently and without interruption until the end came. No wonder if during those weeks he was sometimes aware of a tension of the spirit difficult to sustain. "How can I keep this pitch?" he is reported to have said after finishing one of the chapters. To keep the pitch proved indeed beyond his strength; and that frail organism, taxed so long and so unsparingly in obedience to his indomitable will, at last betrayed him in mid effort.

There remains one more point to be mentioned, as to the speech and manners of the Hanging Judge himself. That these are not a whit exaggerated, in comparison with what is recorded of his historic prototype, Lord Braxfield, is certain. The *locus classicus* in regard to this personage is in Lord Cockburn's *Memorials of his Time.* "Strong built and dark, with rough eyebrows, powerful eyes, threatening lips, and a low growling voice, he was like a formidable blacksmith. His accent and dialect were exaggerated Scotch; his language, like his thoughts, short, strong, and conclusive. Illiterate and without any taste for any refined enjoyment, strength of understanding which gave him power without cultivation, only encouraged him to a more contemptuous disdain of all natures less coarse than his own. It may be

doubted if he was ever so much in his element as when tauntingly repelling the last despairing claim of a wretched culprit, and sending him to Botany Bay or the gallows with an insulting jest. Yet this was not from cruelty, for which he was too strong and too jovial, but from cherished coarseness." Readers, nevertheless, who are at all acquainted with the social history of Scotland will hardly fail to have made the observation that Braxfield's is an extreme case of eighteenth-century manners, as he himself was an eighteenth-century personage (he died in 1799 in his seventy-eighth year); and that for the date in which the story is cast (1814) such manners are somewhat of an anachronism. During the generation contemporary with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars,— or to put it another way, the generation that elapsed between the days when Scott roamed the country as a High School and University student and those when he settled in the fulness of fame and prosperity at Abbotsford,— or again (the allusions will appeal to readers of the admirable Galt) during the intervals between the first and the last provostry of Bailie Pawkie in the borough of Gudetown, or between the earlier and the final ministrations of Mr. Balwhidder in the parish of Dalmailing,— during this period a great softening had taken place in Scottish manners generally, and in those of the Bar and Bench not least. "Since the death of Lord Justice-Clerk Macqueen of Braxfield," says Lockhart, writing about 1817, "the whole exterior of judicial deportment has been quite altered." A similar criticism may probably hold good on the picture of border life contained in the chapter concerning the Four Black Brothers of Cauldstaneslap, viz., that it rather suggests the ways of an earlier generation; nor have I any clew to the reasons which led Stevenson to choose this particular date, in the year preceding Waterloo, for a story which, in regard to some of its features at least, might seem more naturally placed some twenty-five or thirty years before.

If the reader seeks, farther, to know whether the scenery of Hermiston can be identified with any one special place familiar to the writer's early experience, the answer, I think, must be in the negative. Rather it is distilled from a number of different haunts and associations among the moorlands of southern Scotland. In the dedication and in a letter to me he indicates the Lammermuirs as the scene of his tragedy, and Mrs. Stevenson (his mother) tells me that she thinks he was inspired by recollections of a visit paid in boyhood to an uncle living at a remote

farmhouse in that district called Overshiels, in the parish of Stow. But although he may have thought of the Lammermuirs in the first instance, we have already found him drawing his description of the kirk and manse from another haunt of his youth, namely, Glencorse in the Pentlands. And passages in chapters v. and viii. point explicitly to a third district, that is, the country bordering upon Upper Tweeddale and the headwaters of the Clyde. With this country also holiday rides and excursions from Peebles had made him familiar as a boy: and this seems certainly the most natural scene of the story, if only from its proximity to the proper home of the Elliotts, which of course is in the heart of the Border, especially Teviotdale and Ettrick. Some of the geographical names mentioned are clearly not meant to furnish literal indications. The Spango, for instance, is a water running, I believe, not into the Tweed, but into the Nith, and Crossmichael as the name of a town is borrowed from Galloway.

But it is with the general and essential that the artist deals, and questions of strict historical perspective or local definition are beside the mark in considering his work. Nor will any reader expect, or be grateful for, comment in this place on matters which are more properly to the point — on the seizing and penetrating power of the author's ripened art as exhibited in the foregoing pages, the wide range of character and emotion over which he sweeps with so assured a hand, his vital poetry of vision and magic of presentment. Surely no son of Scotland has died leaving with his last breath a worthier tribute to the land he loved.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

GLOSSARY

ae, *one.*
antinomian, *one of a sect which holds that under the Gospel dispensation the moral law is not obligatory.*
Auld Hornie, *the Devil.*

ballant, *ballad.*
bauchles, *brogues, old shoes.*
bees in their bonnet, *fads.*
birling, *whirling.*
black-a-vised, *dark-complexioned.*
bonnet-laird, *small landed proprietor.*
bool, *ball.*
brae, *rising ground.*
butt end, *end of a cottage.*
byre, *cow-house.*

ca', *drive.*
caller, *fresh.*
canna, *cannot.*
canny, *careful, shrewd.*
cantie, *cheerful.*
carline, *an old woman.*
chalmer, *chamber.*
claes, *clothes.*
clamjamfry, *crowd.*
clavers, *idle talk.*
cock-laird, *a yeoman.*
collieshangie, *turmoil.*
crack, *to converse.*
cuddy, *donkey.*
cuist, *cast.*
cutty, *slut.*

daft, *mad, frolicsome.*
dander, *to saunter.*
danders, *cinders.*
daurna, *dare not.*
deave, *to deafen.*
demmy brokens, *demi-broquins.*
dirdum, *vigour.*
disjaskit, *worn out, disreputable-looking.*
doer, *law agent.*
dour, *hard.*
drumlie, *dark.*
dunting, *knocking.*
dule-tree, *the tree of lamentation, the hanging tree:* dule *is also Scots for boundary, and it may mean the boundary tree, the tree on which the baron hung interlopers.*
dwaibly, *infirm, rickety.*

earrand, *errand.*
ettercap, *vixen.*

fechting, *fighting.*

feck, *quantity, portion.*
feckless, *feeble, powerless.*
fell, *strong and fiery.*
fey, *unlike yourself, strange, as persons are observed to be in the hour of approaching death or disaster.*
fit, *foot.*
flyped, *turned up, turned inside out.*
forgather, *to fall in with.*
fule, *fool.*
fushionless, *pithless, weak.*
fyle, *to soil, to defile.*
fylement, *obloquy, defilement.*

gaed, *went.*
gey an', *very.*
gigot, *leg of mutton.*
girzie, *lit. diminutive of Grizel, here a playful nickname.*
glaur, *mud.*
glint, *glance, sparkle.*
gloaming, *twilight.*
glower, *to scowl.*
gobbets, *small lumps.*
gowden, *golden.*
gowsty, *gusty.*
grat, *wept.*
grieve, *land-steward.*
guddle, *to catch fish with the hands by groping under the stones or banks.*
guid, *good.*
gumption, *common sense, judgment.*
gurley, *stormy, surly.*
gyte, *beside itself.*

haddit, *held.*
hae, *have, take.*
hale, *whole.*
heels-ower-hurdie, *heels over head.*
hinney, *honey.*
hirstle, *to bustle.*
hizzie, *wench.*
howl, *hovel.*
hunkered, *crouched.*
hypothec, *lit. a term in Scots law meaning the security given by a tenant to a landlord, as furniture, produce, etc.; by metonymy and colloquially, "the whole structure," "the whole affair."*

idleset, *idleness.*
infeftment, *a term in Scots law originally synonymous with investiture.*

jeely-piece, *a slice of bread and jelly.*
jennipers, *juniper.*
jo, *sweetheart.*
justifeed, *executed, made the victim of justice.*
jyle, *jail.*

kebbuck, *cheese.*
ken, *to know.*
kenspeckle, *conspicuous.*
kilted, *tucked up.*
kyte, *belly.*

laigh, *low.*
laird, *landed proprietor.*
lane, *alone.*

lave, *rest, remainder.*
lown, *lonely, still.*
lynn, *cataract.*

macers, *officers of the court* [cf. *Guy Mannering,* last chapter.]
maun, *must.*
menseful, *of good manners.*
mirk, *dark.*
misbegowk, *deception, disappointment.*
mools, *mould, earth.*
muckle, *much, great, big.*
my lane, *by myself.*

nowt, *black cattle.*

palmering, *walking infirmly.*
panel, *in Scots law, the accused person in a criminal action, the prisoner.*
peel, *a fortified watch-tower.*
plew-stilts, *plough-handles.*
policy, *ornamental grounds of a country mansion.*
puddock, *frog.*

quean, *wench.*

riff-raff, *rabble.*
risping, *grating.*
rowt, *to roar, to rant.*
rowth, *abundance.*
rudas, *haggard old woman.*
runt, *an old cow past breeding, opprobriously, an old woman.*

sab, *sob.*
sanguishes, *sandwiches.*
sasine, *in Scots law, the act of giving legal possession of feudal property, or, colloquially, the deed by which that possession is proved.*
sclamber, *to scramble.*
sculduddery, *impropriety, grossness.*
session, *the Court of Session, the supreme court of Scotland.*
shauchling, *shuffling.*
shoo, *to chase gently.*
siller, *money.*
sinsyne, *since then.*
skailing, *dispersing.*
skelp, *slap.*
skirling, *screaming.*
skreigh-o'-day, *daybreak.*
snash, *abuse.*
sneisty, *supercilious.*
sooth, *to hum.*
speir, *to ask.*
spĕldering, *sprawling.*
splairge, *to splash.*
spunk, *spirit, fire.*
steik, *to shut.*
sugar-bool, *sugar-plum.*

tawpie, *a slow, foolish slut.*
telling you, *a good thing for you.*
thir, *these.*
thrawn, *cross-grained.*
toon, *town.*
two-names, *local sobriquets in addition to patronymic.*
tyke, *dog.*

unchancy, *unlucky.*

unco, *strange, extraordinary, very.*
upsitten, *impertinent.*
vivers, *victuals.*

waling, *choosing.*
warrandise, *warranty.*
waur, *worse*
weird, *destiny.*
whammle, *to upset.*
whaup, *curlew.*
windlestrae, *crested dog's-tail grass.*

yin, *one.*

THE PLAYS OF
W. E. HENLEY AND R. L. STEVENSON

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DEACON BRODIE OR THE DOUBLE LIFE

A MELODRAMA IN FIVE ACTS AND EIGHT TABLEAUX

PERSONS REPRESENTED

WILLIAM BRODIE, Deacon of the Wrights, Housebreaker and Master Carpenter.
OLD BRODIE, the Deacon's Father.
WILLIAM LAWSON, Procurator-Fiscal, the Deacon's Uncle.
ANDREW AINSLIE, }
HUMPHREY MOORE, } Robbers in the Deacon's gang.
GEORGE SMITH, }
CAPTAIN RIVERS, an English Highwayman.
HUNT, A Bow Street Runner.
A DOCTOR.
WALTER LESLIE.
MARY BRODIE, the Deacon's Sister.
JEAN WATT, the Deacon's Mistress.
VAGABONDS, OFFICERS OF THE WATCH, MEN-SERVANTS.

The Scene is laid in Edinburgh. The Time is towards the close of the Eighteenth Century. The Action, some fifty hours long, begins at eight p. m. on Saturday and ends before midnight on Monday.

NOTE.—Passages suggested for omission in representation are enclosed in square brackets, thus [ ].

SYNOPSIS OF ACTS AND TABLEAUX

ACT I.

TABLEAU I. . . . . The Double Life.
TABLEAU II. . . . . Hunt the Runner.
TABLEAU III. . . . . Mother Clarke's.

ACT II.

TABLEAU IV. . . . . Evil and Good.

ACT III.

TABLEAU V. . . . . King's Evidence.
TABLEAU VI. . . . . Unmasked.

ACT IV.

TABLEAU VII. . . . . The Robbery.

ACT V.

TABLEAU VIII. . . . . The Open Door.

LONDON: PRINCE'S THEATRE

2d July 1884.

Deacon Brodie,	Mr. E. J. Henley.
Walter Leslie,	Mr. Charles Cartwright.
William Lawson,	Mr. John Maclean.
Andrew Ainslie,	Mr. Fred. Desmond.
Humphrey Moore,	Mr. Edmund Grace.
George Smith,	Mr. Julian Cross.
Hunt,	Mr. Hubert Akhurst.
Old Brodie,	Mr. A. Knight.
Captain Rivers,	Mr. Brandon Thomas.
Mary Brodie,	Miss Lizzie Williams.
Jean Watt,	Miss Minnie Bell.

MONTREAL

26th September 1887.

Deacon Brodie,	Mr. E. J. Henley.
Walter Leslie,	Mr. Graham Stewart.
William Lawson,	Mr. Edmund Lyons.
Andrew Ainslie,	Mr. Fred. Desmond.
Humphrey Moore,	Mr. Edmund Grace.
George Smith,	Mr. Horatio Saker.
Hunt,	Mr. Henry Vernon.
Captain Rivers,	Mr. Bruce Philips.
Mary Brodie,	Miss Annie Robe.
Jean Watt,	Miss Carrie Coote.

ACT I

TABLEAU I

The Double Life

The Stage represents a room in the Deacon's house, furnished partly as a sitting-, partly as a bed-room, in the style of an easy burgess of about 1780. *C., a door; L. C., a second and smaller door; R. C., practicable window; L., alcove, supposed to contain bed; at the back, a clothes-press and a corner cupboard containing bottles, etc.* Mary Brodie *at needlework;* Old Brodie, *a paralytic, in wheeled chair, at the fireside, L.*

SCENE I

To these Leslie, *C.*

Leslie. May I come in, Mary?

Mary. Why not?

Leslie. I scarce knew where to find you.

Mary. The dad and I must have a corner, must we not? So when my brother's friends are in the parlour he allows us to sit in his room. 'Tis a great favour, I can tell you; the place is sacred.

Leslie. Are you sure that "sacred" is strong enough?

Mary. You are satirical!

Leslie. I? And with regard to the Deacon? Believe

me, I am not so ill-advised. You have trained me well, and I feel by him as solemnly as a true-born Brodie.

MARY. And now you are impertinent! Do you mean to go any further? We are a fighting race, we Brodies. Oh, you may laugh, sir! But 'tis no child's play to jest us on our Deacon, or, for that matter, on our Deacon's chamber either. It was his father's before him: he works in it by day and sleeps in it by night; and scarce anything it contains but is the labour of his hands. Do you see this table, Walter? He made it while he was yet a 'prentice. I remember how I used to sit and watch him at his work. It would be grand, I thought, to be able to do as he did, and handle edge-tools without cutting my fingers, and getting my ears pulled for a meddlesome minx! He used to give me his mallet to keep and his nails to hold; and didn't I fly when he called for them! and wasn't I proud to be ordered about with them! And then, you know, there is the tall cabinet yonder; that it was that proved him the first of Edinburgh joiners, and worthy to be their Deacon and their head. And the father's chair, and the sister's workbox, and the dear dead mother's footstool — what are they all but proofs of the Deacon's skill, and tokens of the Deacon's care for those about him?

LESLIE. I am all penitence. Forgive me this last time, and I promise you I never will again.

MARY. Candidly, now, do you think you deserve forgiveness?

LESLIE. Candidly, I do not.

MARY. Then I suppose you must have it. What have you done with Willie and my uncle?

LESLIE. I left them talking deeply. The dear old

Procurator has not much thought just now for anything but those mysterious burglaries——

MARY. I know!——

LESLIE. Still, all of him that is not magistrate and official is politician and citizen; and he has been striving his hardest to undermine the Deacon's principles, and win the Deacon's vote and interest.

MARY. They are worth having, are they not?

LESLIE. The Procurator seems to think that having them makes the difference between winning and losing.

MARY. Did he say so? You may rely upon it that he knows. There are not many in Edinburgh who can match with our Will.

LESLIE. There shall be as many as you please, and not one more.

MARY. How I should like to have heard you! What did uncle say? Did he speak of the Town Council again? Did he tell Will what a wonderful Bailie he would make? O why did you come away?

LESLIE. I could not pretend to listen any longer. The election is months off yet; and if it were not—if it were tramping upstairs this moment—drums, flags, cockades, guineas, candidates, and all!—how should I care for it? What are Whig and Tory to me?

MARY. O fie on you! It is for every man to concern himself in the common weal. Mr. Leslie—Leslie of the Craig!—should know that much at least.

LESLIE. And be a politician like the Deacon! All in good time, but not now. I hearkened while I could, and when I could no more I slipped out and followed my heart. I hoped I should be welcome.

MARY. I suppose you mean to be unkind.

LESLIE. Tit for tat. Did you not ask me why I came away? And is it usual for a young lady to say "Mr." to the man she means to marry?

MARY. That is for the young lady to decide, sir.

LESLIE. And against that judgment there shall be no appeal?

MARY. O, if you mean to argue!——

LESLIE. I do not mean to argue. I am content to love and be loved. I think I am the happiest man in the world.

MARY. That is as it should be; for I am the happiest girl.

LESLIE. Why not say the happiest wife? I have your word, and you have mine. Is not that enough?

MARY. Have you so soon forgotten? Did I not tell you how it must be as my brother wills? I can do only as he bids me.

LESLIE. Then you have not spoken as you promised?

MARY. I have been too happy to speak.

LESLIE. I am his friend. Precious as you are, he will trust you to me. He has but to know how I love you, Mary, and how your life is all in your love of me, to give us his blessing with a full heart.

MARY. I am sure of him. It is that which makes my happiness complete. Even to our marriage I should find it hard to say "Yes" when he said "No."

LESLIE. Your father is trying to speak. I 'll wager he echoes you.

MARY (*to* OLD BRODIE). My poor dearie! Do you want to say anything to me? No? Is it to Mr. Leslie, then?

LESLIE. I am listening, Mr. Brodie.

MARY. What is it, daddie?

OLD BRODIE. My son — the Deacon — Deacon Brodie — the first at school.

LESLIE. I know it, Mr. Brodie. Was I not the last in the same class? (*To* MARY.) But he seems to have forgotten us.

MARY. O yes! his mind is wellnigh gone. He will sit for hours as you see him, and never speak nor stir but at the touch of Will's hand or the sound of Will's name.

LESLIE. It is so good to sit beside you. By and by it will be always like this. You will not let me speak to the Deacon? You are fast set upon speaking yourself? I could be so eloquent, Mary — I would touch him. I cannot tell you how I fear to trust my happiness to any one else — even to you!

MARY. He must hear of my good fortune from none but me. And besides, you do not understand. We are not like familes, we Brodies. We are so clannish, we hold so close together.

LESLIE. You Brodies, and your Deacon!

OLD BRODIE. Deacon of his craft, sir — Deacon of the Wrights — my son! If his mother — his mother — had but lived to see!

MARY. You hear how he runs on. A word about my brother and he catches it. 'Tis as if he were awake in his poor blind way to all the Deacon's care for him and all the Deacon's kindness to me. I believe he only lives in the thought of the Deacon. There, it is not so long since I was one with him. But indeed I think we are all Deacon-mad, we Brodies. Are we not, daddie dear?

BRODIE (*without, and entering*). You are a mighty magistrate, Procurator, but you seem to have met your match.

SCENE II

To these, BRODIE *and* LAWSON

MARY (*curtseying*). So, uncle! you have honoured us at last.

LAWSON. *Quam primum,* my dear, *quam primum.*

BRODIE. Well, father, do you know me? (*He sits beside his father and takes his hand.*)

[OLD BRODIE. William — ay — Deacon. Greater man — than — his father.

BRODIE. You see, Procurator, the news is as fresh to him as it was five years ago. He was struck down before he got the Deaconship, and lives his lost life in mine.

LAWSON. Ay, I mind. He was aye ettling after a bit handle to his name. He was kind of hurt when first they made me Procurator.]

MARY. And what have you been talking of?

LAWSON. Just o' thae robberies, Mary. Baith as a burgher and a Crown offeecial, I tak' the maist absorbing interest in thae robberies.

LESLIE. Egad, Procurator, and so do I.

BRODIE (*with a quick look at* LESLIE). A dilettante interest, doubtless! See what it is to be idle.

LESLIE. Faith, Brodie, I hardly know how to style it.

BRODIE. At any rate, 'tis not the interest of a victim, or we should certainly have known of it before; nor a

practical tool-mongering interest, like my own; nor an interest professional and official, like the Procurator's. You can answer for that, I suppose?

LESLIE. I think I can; if for no more. It's an interest of my own, you see, and is best described as indescribable, and of no manner of moment to anybody. [It will take no hurt if we put off its discussion till a month of Sundays.]

BRODIE. You are more fortunate than you deserve. What do you say, Procurator?

LAWSON. Ay is he! There's no a house in Edinburgh safe. The law is clean helpless, clean helpless! A week syne it was auld Andra Simpson's in the Lawnmarket. Then, naething would set the catamarans but to forgather privily wi' the Provost's ain butler, and tak' unto themselves the Provost's ain plate. And the day, information was laid before me offeecially that the limmers had made infraction, *vi et clam*, into Leddy Mar'get Dalziel's, and left her leddyship wi' no sae muckle's a spune to sup her parritch wi'. It's unbelieveable, it's awful, it's anti-christian!

MARY. If you only knew them, uncle, what an example you would make! But tell me, is it not strange that men should dare such things, in the midst of a city, and nothing, nothing be known of them — nothing at all?

LESLIE. Little, indeed! But we do know that there are several in the gang, and that one at least is an unrivalled workman.

LAWSON. Ye're right, sir; ye're vera right, Mr. Leslie. It had been deponed to me offeecially that no a tradesman — no the Deacon here himsel' — could have made

a cleaner job wi' Andra Simpson's shutters. And as for the lock o' the bank — but that's an auld sang.

BRODIE. I think you believe too much, Procurator. Rumour's an ignorant jade, I tell you. I've had occasion to see some little of their handiwork — broken cabinets, broken shutters, broken doors — and I find them bunglers. Why, I could do it better myself!

LESLIE. Gad, Brodie, you and I might go into partnership. I back myself to watch outside, and I suppose you could do the work of skill within?

BRODIE. An opposition company? Leslie, your mind is full of good things. Suppose we begin to-night, and give the Procurator's house the honours of our innocence?

MARY. You could do anything, you two!

LAWSON. Onyway, Deacon, ye'd put your ill-gotten gains to a right use; they might come by the wind but they wouldna gang wi' the water; and that's aye a *solatium*, as we say. If I am to be robbit, I would like to be robbit wi' decent folk; and no think o' my bonnie clean siller dirling among jads and dicers. [Faith, William, the mair I think on't, the mair I'm o' Mr. Leslie's mind. Come the night, or come the morn, and I'se gie ye my free permission, and lend ye a hand in at the window forbye!

BRODIE. Come, come, Procurator, lead not our poor clay into temptation. (LESLIE *and* MARY *talk apart.*)

LAWSON. I'm no muckle afraid for your puir clay, as ye ca't.] But hark i' your ear: ye're likely, joking apart, to be gey and sune in partnership wi' Mr. Leslie. He and Mary are gey and pack, a'body can see that.

[BRODIE. "Daffin' and want o' wit"—you know the rest.

LAWSON. *Vidi, scivi, et audivi,* as we say in a Sasine, William.] Man, because my wig's pouthered do you think I havena a green heart? I was aince a lad mysel', and I ken fine by the glint o' the e'e when a lad's fain and a lassie's willing. And, man, it's the town's talk; *communis error fit jus,* ye ken.

[OLD BRODIE. Oh!

LAWSON. See, ye're hurting your faither's hand.

BRODIE. Dear dad, it is not good to have an ill-tempered son.

LAWSON. What the deevil ails ye at the match? 'Od, man, he has a nice bit divot o' Fife corn-land, I can tell ye, and some Bordeaux wine in his cellar! But I needna speak o' the Bordeaux; ye'll ken the smack o't as weel's I do mysel'; onyway it's grand wine. *Tantum et tale.* I tell ye the *pro's,* find you the *con's,* if ye're able.]

BRODIE. [I am sorry, Procurator, but I must be short with you.] You are talking in the air, as lawyers will. I prefer to drop the subject [and it will displease me if you return to it in my hearing].

LESLIE. At four o'clock to-morrow? At my house? (*to* MARY).

MARY. As soon as church is done. (*Exit* MARY.)

LAWSON. Ye needna be sae high and mighty, onyway.

BRODIE. I ask your pardon, Procurator. But we Brodies—you know our failings! [A bad temper and a humour of privacy.]

LAWSON. Weel, I maun be about my business. But I could tak' a doch-an-dorach, William; *superflua non nocent*, as we say; an extra dram hurts naebody, Mr. Leslie.

BRODIE (*with bottle and glasses*). Here's your old friend, Procurator. Help yourself, Leslie. Oh no, thank you, not any for me. You strong people have the advantage of me there. With my attacks, you know, I must always live a bit of a hermit's life.

LAWSON. 'Od, man, that's fine; that's health o' mind and body. Mr. Leslie, here's to you, sir. 'Od, it's harder to end than to begin wi' stuff like that.

SCENE III

To these, SMITH *and* JEAN, *C.*

SMITH. Is the king of the castle in, please?

LAWSON (*aside*). Lord's sake, it's Smith!

BRODIE (*to* SMITH). I beg your pardon?

SMITH. I beg yours, sir. If you please, sir, is Mr. Brodie at home, sir?

BRODIE. What do want with him, my man?

SMITH. I've a message for him, sir, a job of work, sir!

BRODIE (*to* SMITH; *referring to* JEAN). And who is this?

JEAN. I am here for the Procurator, about my rent. There's nae offence, I hope, sir.

LAWSON. It's just an honest wife I let a flat to in Libberton's Wynd. It'll be for the rent?

JEAN. Just that, sir.

LAWSON. Weel, ye can just bide here a wee, and I'll step down the road to my office wi' ye. (*Exeunt* BRODIE, LAWSON, LESLIE, *C.*)

SCENE IV

SMITH, JEAN WATT, OLD BRODIE

SMITH (*bowing them out*). Your humble and most devoted servant, George Smith, Esquire. And so this is the garding, is it? And this is the style of horticulture? Ha, it is! (*At the mirror.*) In that case George's mother bids him bind his hair. (*Kisses his hand.*) My dearest Duchess,— (*To* JEAN.) I say, Jean, there's a good deal of difference between this sort of thing and the way we does it in Libberton's Wynd.

JEAN. I daursay. And what wad ye expeck?

SMITH. Ah, Jean, if you'd cast affection's glance on this poor but honest soger! George Lord S. is not the nobleman to cut the object of his flame before the giddy throng; nor to keep her boxed up in an old mouse-trap, while he himself is revelling in purple splendours like these. He didn't know you, Jean: he was afraid to. Do you call that a man? Try a man that is.

JEAN. Geordie Smith, ye ken vera weel I'll tak' nane o' that sort of talk frae you. And what kind o' a man are you to even yoursel' to the likes o' him? He's a gentleman.

SMITH. Ah, ain't he just! And don't he live up to it? I say, Jean, feel of this chair.

JEAN. My! look at yon bed!

SMITH. The carpet too! Axminster, by the bones of Oliver Cromwell!

JEAN. What a expense!

SMITH. Hey, brandy! The deuce of the grape! Have a toothful, Mrs. Watt. [(*Sings*) —

"Says Bacchus to Venus,
There's brandy between us,
And the cradle of love is the bowl, the bowl!"]

JEAN. Nane for me, I thank ye, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. What brings the man from stuff like this to rotgut and spittoons at Mother Clarke's; but ah, George, you was born for a higher spear! And so was you, Mrs. Watt, though I say it that shouldn't. (*Seeing* OLD BRODIE *for the first time.*) Hullo! it's a man!

JEAN. Thonder in the chair. (*They go to look at him, their backs to the door.*)

GEORGE. Is he alive?

JEAN. I think there's something wrong with him.

GEORGE. And how was you to-morrow, my valued old gentleman, eh?

JEAN. Dinna mak' a mock o' him, Geordie.

OLD BRODIE. My son — the Deacon — Deacon of his trade.

JEAN. He'll be his feyther. (HUNT *appears at door C., and stands looking on.*)

SMITH. The Deacon's old man! Well, he couldn't expect to have his quiver full of sich, could he, Jean? (*To* OLD BRODIE.) Ah, my Christian soldier, if you had, the world would have been more varigated. Mrs. Deakin (*to* JEAN), let me introduce you to your dear papa.

JEAN. Think shame to yoursel'! This is the Deacon's house; you and me shouldna be here by rights; and if

we are, it's the least we can do to behave dacent. [This is no the way ye'll mak' me like ye.]

SMITH. All right, Duchess. Don't be angry.

SCENE V

To these, HUNT, *C.* (*He steals down, and claps each one suddenly on the shoulder*)

HUNT. Is there a gentleman here by the name of Mr. Procurator-Fiscal?

SMITH (*pulling himself together*). D——n it, Jerry, what do you mean by startling an old customer like that?

HUNT. What, my brave un'? You're the very party I was looking for!

SMITH. There's nothing out against me this time?

HUNT. I'll take odds there is. But it ain't in my hands. (*To* OLD BRODIE.) You'll excuse me, old gentleman?

SMITH. Ah, well, if it's all in the way of friendship! . . . I say, Jean, [you and me had best be on the toddle]. We shall be late for church.

HUNT. Lady, George?

SMITH. It's a——yes, it's a lady. Come along, Jean.

HUNT. A Mrs. Deacon, I believe? [That was the name, I think?] Won't Mrs. Deacon let me have a queer at her phiz?

JEAN (*unmuffling*). I've naething to be ashamed of. My name's Mistress Watt; I'm weel kennt at the Wynd heid; there's naething again me.

HUNT. No, to be sure, there ain't; and why clap on

the blinkers, my dear? You that has a face like a rose, and with a cove like Jerry Hunt that might be your born father? [But all this don't tell me about Mr. Procurator-Fiscal.]

GEORGE (*in an agony*). Jean, Jean, we shall be late. (*Going with attempted swagger.*) Well, ta-ta, Jerry.

SCENE VI

To these, C, BRODIE *and* LAWSON (*greatcoat, muffler, lantern*)

LAWSON (*from the door*). Come your ways, Mistress Watt.

JEAN. That's the Fiscal himsel'.

HUNT. Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I believe?

LAWSON. That's me. Who'll you be?

HUNT. Hunt the Runner, sir; Hunt from Bow Street; English warrant.

LAWSON. There's a place for a' things, officer. Come your ways to my office, with me and this guid wife.

BRODIE (*aside to* JEAN, *as she passes with a curtesy*). How dare you be here? (*Aloud to* SMITH.) Wait you here, my man.

SMITH. If you please, sir. (BRODIE *goes out, C.*)

SCENE VII

BRODIE, SMITH

BRODIE. What the devil brings you here?

SMITH. *Con*found it, Deakin! Not rusty?

[BRODIE. And not you only: Jean too! Are you mad?

SMITH. Why, you don't mean to say, Deakin, that you have been stodged by G. Smith, Esquire? Plummy old George?]

BRODIE. There was my uncle the Procurator——

SMITH. The Fiscal? He don't count.

BRODIE. What d'ye mean?

SMITH. Well, Deakin, since Fiscal Lawson's Nunkey Lawson, and it's all in the family way, I don't mind telling you that Nunkey Lawson's a customer of George's. We give Nunkey Lawson a good deal of brandy—G. S. and Co's celebrated Nantz.

BRODIE. What! does he buy that smuggled trash of yours?

SMITH. Well, we don't call it smuggled in the trade, Deakin. It's a wink, and King George's picter between G. S. and the Nunks.

BRODIE. Gad! that's worth knowing. O Procurator, Procurator, is there no such thing as virtue? [*Allons!* It's enough to cure a man of vice for this world and the other.] But hark you hither, Smith; this is all damned well in its way, but it don't explain what brings you here.

SMITH. I've trapped a pigeon for you.

BRODIE. Can't you pluck him yourself?

SMITH. Not me. He's too flash in the feather for a simple nobleman like George Lord Smith. It's the great Capting Starlight, fresh in from York. [He's exercised his noble art all the way from here to London. "Stand and deliver, stap my vitals!"] And the north road is no bad lay, Deakin.

BRODIE. Flush?

SMITH (*mimicking*). "The graziers, split me! A

mail, stap my vitals! and seven demned farmers, by the Lard — "

BRODIE. By Gad!

SMITH. Good for trade, ain't it? And we thought, Deakin, the Badger and me, that coins being ever on the vanish, and you not over sweet on them there lovely little locks at Leslie's, and them there bigger and uglier marine stores at the Excise Office . . .

BRODIE (*impassible.*) Go on.

SMITH. Worse luck! . . . We thought, me and the Badger, you know, that maybe you'd like to exercise your helbow with our free and galliant horseman.

BRODIE. The old move, I presume? the double set of dice?

SMITH. That's the rig, Deakin. What you drop on the square you pick up again on the cross. [Just as you did with G. S. and Co's own agent and correspondent, the Admiral from Nantz.] You always was a neat hand with the bones, Deakin.

BRODIE. The usual terms, I suppose?

SMITH. The old discount, Deakin. Ten in the pound for you, and the rest for your jolly companions every one. [*That's* the way *we* does it!]

BRODIE. Who has the dice?

SMITH. Our mutual friend, the Candleworm.

BRODIE. You mean Ainslie? — We trust that creature too much, Geordie.

SMITH. He's all right, Marquis. He wouldn't lay a finger on his own mother. Why, he's no more guile in him than a set of sheep's trotters.

[BRODIE. You think so? Then see he don't cheat you over the dice, and give you light for loaded. See to

that, George, see to that; and you may count the Captain as bare as his last grazier.

SMITH. The Black Flag for ever! George'll trot him round to Mother Clarke's in two twos.] How long'll you be?

BRODIE. The time to lock up and go to bed, and I'll be with you. Can you find your way out?

SMITH. Bloom on, my Sweet William, in peaceful array. Ta-ta.

SCENE VIII

BRODIE, OLD BRODIE; *to whom*, MARY

MARY. O Willie, I am glad you did not go with them. I have something to tell you. If you knew how happy I am, you would clap your hands, Will. But come, sit you down there, and be my good big brother, and I will kneel here and take your hand. We must keep close to dad, and then he will feel happiness in the air. The poor old love, if we could only tell him! But I sometimes think his heart has gone to heaven already, and takes a part in all our joys and sorrows; and it is only his poor body that remains here, helpless and ignorant. Come, Will, sit you down, and ask me questions — or guess — that will be better, guess.

BRODIE. Not to-night, Mary; not to-night. I have other fish to fry, and they won't wait.

MARY. Not one minute for your sister? One little minute for your little sister?

BRODIE. Minutes are precious, Mary. I have to work for all of us, and the clock is always busy. They are

waiting for me even now. Help me with the dad's chair. And then to bed, and dream happy things. And to-morrow morning I will hear your news — your good news; it must be good, you look so proud and glad. But to-night it cannot be.

MARY. I hate your business — I hate all business. To think of chairs, and tables, and footrules, all dead and wooden — and cold pieces of money with the King's ugly head on them; and here is your sister, your pretty sister, if you please, with something to tell, which she would not tell you for the world, and would give the world to have you guess, and you won't? — Not you! For business! Fie, Deacon Brodie! But I'm too happy to find fault with you.

BRODIE. "And me a Deacon," as the Procurator would say.

MARY. No such thing, sir! I am not a bit afraid of you — nor a bit angry neither. Give me a kiss, and promise me hours and hours to-morrow morning.

BRODIE. All day long to-morrow, if you like.

MARY. Business or none?

BRODIE. Business or none, little sister! I'll make time, I promise you; and there's another kiss for surety. Come along. (*They proceed to push out the chair, L.C.*) The wine and wisdom of this evening have given me one of my headaches, and I'm in haste for bed. You'll be good, won't you, and see they make no noise, and let me sleep my fill to-morrow morning till I wake?

MARY. Poor Will! How selfish I must have seemed! You should have told me sooner, and I wouldn't have worried you. Come along.

(*She goes out, pushing chair.*)

SCENE IX

BRODIE

(*He closes, locks, and double-bolts both doors*)

BRODIE. Now for one of the Deacon's headaches! Rogues all, rogues all! (*Goes to clothes-press, and proceeds to change his coat.*) On with the new coat and into the new life! Down with the Deacon and up with the robber! (*Changing neck-band and ruffles.*) Eh God! how still the house is! There's something in hypocrisy after all. If we were as good as we seem, what would the world be? [The city has its vizard on, and we — at night we are our naked selves. Trysts are keeping, bottles cracking, knives are stripping; and here is Deacon Brodie flaming forth the man of men he is!] — How still it is! . . . My father and Mary — Well! the day for them, the night for me; the grimy cynical night that makes all cats grey, and all honesties of one complexion. Shall a man not have *half* a life of his own? — not eight hours out of twenty-four? [Eight shall he have should he dare the pit of Tophet.] (*Takes out money.*) Where's the blunt? I must be cool to-night, or . . . steady, Deacon, you must win; damn you, you must! You must win back the dowry that you've stolen, and marry your sister, and pay your debts, and gull the world a little longer! (*As he blows out the lights.*) The Deacon's going to bed — the poor sick Deacon! *Allons!* (*Throws up the window, and looks out.*) Only the stars to see me! (*Addressing the bed.*) Lie there, Deacon! sleep and be well to-morrow. As

for me, I'm a man once more till morning. (*Gets out of the window.*)

TABLEAU II

Hunt the Runner

The Scene represents the Procurator's Office

SCENE I

Lawson, Hunt

[Lawson (*entering*). Step your ways in, Officer. (*At wing.*) Mr. Carfrae, give a chair to yon decent wife that cam' in wi' me. Nae news?

A voice without. Naething, sir.

Lawson (*sitting.*) Weel, Officer, and what can I do for you?]

Hunt. Well, sir, as I was saying, I've an English warrant for the apprehension of one Jemmy Rivers, *alias* Captain Starlight, now at large within your jurisdiction.

Lawson. That'll be the highwayman?

Hunt. That same, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal. The Captain's given me a hard hunt of it this time. I dropped on his marks first at Huntingdon, but he was away North, and I had to up and after him. I heard of him all along the York road, for he's a light hand on the pad, has Jemmy, and leaves his mark. [I missed him at York by four-and-twenty hours, and lost him for as much more. Then I picked him up again at Carlisle, and we made a race of it for the Border; but he'd a better nag, and was best up in the road; so I had to

wait till I ran him to earth in Edinburgh here and could get a new warrant.] So here I am, sir. They told me you were an active sort of gentleman, and I'm an active man myself. And Sir John Fielding, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, he's an active gentleman, likewise, though he's blind as a himage, and he desired his compliments to you [sir, and said that between us he thought we'd do the trick].

LAWSON. Ay, he'll be a fine man, Sir John. Hand me owre your papers, Hunt, and you'll have your new warrant *quam primum*. And see here, Hunt, ye'll aiblins have a while to yoursel', and an active man, as ye say ye are, should aye be grinding grist. We're sair forfeuchen wi' our burglaries. *Non constat de personâ*. We canna get a grip o' the delinquents. Here is the *Hue and Cry*. Ye see there is a guid two hundred pounds for ye.

HUNT. Well, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal [I ain't a rich man, and two hundred's two hundred. Thereby, sir], I don't mind telling you I've had a bit of a worry at it already. You see, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I had to look into a ken to-night about the Captain, and an old cock always likes to be sure of his walk; so I got one of your Scotch officers — him as was so polite as to show me round to Mr. Brodie's — to give me full particulars about the 'ouse, and the flash companions that use it. In his list I drop on the names of two old lambs of my own; and I put it to you, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, as a gentleman as knows the world, if what's a black sheep in London is likely or not to be keeping school in Edinburgh?

LAWSON. *Coelum non animum*. A just observe.

HUNT. I'll give it a thought, sir, and see if I can't kill two birds with one stone. Talking of which, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, I'd like to have a bit of a confab with that nice young woman as came to pay her rent.

LAWSON. Hunt, that's a very decent woman.

HUNT. And a very decent woman may have mighty queer pals, Mr. Procurator-Fiscal. Lord love you, sir, I don't know what the profession would do without 'em!

LAWSON. Ye're vera richt, Hunt. An active and a watchful officer. I'll send her in till ye.

SCENE II

HUNT (*solus*)

Two hundred pounds reward. Curious thing. One burglary after another, and these Scotch blockheads without a man to show for it. Jock runs east, and Sawney cuts west; everything's at a deadlock; and they go on calling themselves thief-catchers! [By Jingo, I'll show them how we do it down South! Well, I ve worn out a good deal of saddle leather over Jemmy Rivers; but here's for new breeches if you like.] Let's have another queer at the list. (*Reads.*) "Humphrey Moore, otherwise Badger; aged forty, thick-set, dark, close-cropped; has been a prize-fighter; no apparent occupation." Badger's an old friend of mine. "George Smith, otherwise the Dook, otherwise Jingling Geordie; red-haired and curly, slight, flash; an old thimble-rig; has been a stroller; suspected of smug-

gling; an associate of loose women." G. S., Esquire, is another of my flock. "Andrew Ainslie, otherwise Slink Ainslie; aged thirty-five; thin, white-faced, lank-haired; no occupation; has been in trouble for reset of theft and subornation of youth; might be useful as king's evidence." That's an acquaintance to make. "Jock Hamilton, otherwise Sweepie," and so on. ["Willie M'Glashan," hum — yes, and so on, and so on.] Ha! here's the man I want. "William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights, about thirty; tall, slim, dark; wears his own hair; is often at Clarke's but seemingly for purposes of amusement only; [is nephew to the Procurator-Fiscal; is commercially sound, but has of late (it is supposed) been short of cash; has lost much at cock-fighting;] is proud, clever, of good repute, but is fond of adventures and secrecy, and keeps low company." Now, here's what I ask myself; here's this list of the family party that drop into Mother Clarke's; it's been in the hands of these nincompoops for weeks, and I'm the first to cry Queer Street! Two well-known cracksmen, Badger and the Dook! why, there's Jack in the Orchard at once. This here topsawyer work they talk about, of course that's a chalk above Badger and the Dook. But how about our Mohock-tradesman? "Purposes of amusement!" What next? Deacon of the Wrights? and wright in their damned lingo means a kind of carpenter, I fancy? Why, damme, it's the man's trade! I'll look you up, Mr. William Brodie, Deacon of the Wrights. As sure as my name's Jerry Hunt, I wouldn't take one-ninety-nine in gold for my chance of that 'ere two hundred!

SCENE III

HUNT; *to him* JEAN

HUNT. Well, my dear, and how about your gentleman friend now? How about Deacon Brodie?

JEAN. I dinna ken your name, sir, nor yet whae ye are; but this is a very poor employ for ony gentleman — it sets ill wi' ony gentleman to cast my shame in my teeth.

HUNT. Lord love you, my dear, that ain't my line of country. Suppose you're not married and churched a hundred thousand times, what odds to Jerry Hunt? Jerry, my Pamela Prue, is a cove as might be your parent; a cove renowned for the ladies' friend [and he's dead certain to be on your side]. What I can't get over is this: here's this Mr. Deacon Brodie doing the genteel at home, and leaving a nice young 'oman like you — as a cove may say — to take it out on cold potatoes. That's what I can't get over, Mrs. Watt. I'm a family man myself; and I can't get over it.

JEAN. And whae said that to ye? They lee'd whatever. I get naething but guid by him; and I had nae richt to gang to his house; and O, I just ken I've been the ruin of him!

HUNT. Don't you take on, Mrs. Watt. Why, now I hear you piping up for him, I begin to think a lot of him myself. I like a cove to be open-handed and free.

JEAN. Weel, sir, and he's a' that.

HUNT. Well, that shows what a wicked world this is. Why, they told me ——. Well, well, "here's the

open 'and and the 'appy 'art." And how much, my dear — speaking as a family man — now, how much might your gentleman friend stand you in the course of a year?

JEAN. What's your wull?

HUNT. That's a mighty fancy shawl, Mrs. Watt. [I should like to take its next-door neighbour to Mrs. Hunt in King Street, Common Garden.] What's about the figure?

JEAN. It's paid for. Ye can sweir to that.

HUNT. Yes, my dear, and so is King George's crown; but I don't know what it cost, and I don't know where the blunt came from to pay for it.

JEAN. I'm thinking ye'll be a vera clever gentleman.

HUNT. So I am, my dear; and I like you none the worse for being artful yourself. But between friends now, and speaking as a family man ——

JEAN. I'll be wishin' ye a fine nicht. (*Curtsies and goes out.*)

SCENE IV

HUNT (*solus*)

HUNT. Ah! that's it, is it? "My fancy man's my 'ole delight," as we say in Bow Street. But which *is* the fancy man? George the Dook, or William the Deacon? One or both? (*He winks solemnly.*) Well, Jerry, my boy, here's your work cut out for you; but if you took one-nine-five for that ere little two hundred you'd be a disgrace to the profession.

TABLEAU III

MOTHER CLARKE'S

SCENE I

The stage represents a room of coarse and sordid appearance: settles, spittoons, etc.; sanded floor. A large table at back, where AINSLIE, HAMILTON, *and others are playing cards and quarrelling. In front, L. and R. smaller tables, at one of which are* BRODIE *and* MOORE, *drinking.* MRS. CLARKE *and women serving.*

MOORE. You've got the devil's own luck, Deacon, that's what you've got.

BRODIE. Luck! Don't talk of luck to a man like me! Why not say I've the devil's own judgment? Men of my stamp don't risk—they plan, Badger; they plan, and leave chance to such cattle as you [and Jingling Geordie. They make opportunities before they take them].

MOORE. You're artful, ain't you?

BRODIE. Should I be here else? When I leave my house I leave an *alibi* behind me. I'm ill—ill with a jumping headache, and the fiend's own temper. I'm sick in bed this minute, and they're all going about with the fear of death on them lest they should disturb the poor sick Deacon. [My bedroom door is barred and bolted like the bank—you remember!—and all the while the window's open, and the Deacon's over the hills and far away. What do you think of me?]

MOORE. I've seen your sort before, I have.

BRODIE. Not you. As for Leslie's——

MOORE. That was a nick above you.

BRODIE. Ay was it. He wellnigh took me red-handed; and that was better luck than I deserved. If I'd not been drunk, and in my tantrums, you'd never have got my hand within a thousand years of such a job.

MOORE. Why not? You're the King of the Cracksmen, ain't you?

BRODIE. Why not! He asks me why not! Gods, what a brain it is! Hark ye, Badger, it's all very well to be King of the Cracksmen, as you call it; but however respectable he may have the misfortune to be, one's friend is one's friend, and as such must be severely let alone. What! shall there be no more honour among thieves than there is honesty among politicians? Why, man, if under heaven there were but one poor lock unpicked, and that the lock of one whose claret you've drunk, and who has babbled of woman across your own mahogany—that lock, sir, were entirely sacred. Sacred as the Kirk of Scotland; sacred as King George upon his throne; sacred as the memory of Bruce and Bannockburn.

MOORE. Oh, rot! I ain't a parson, I ain't; I never had no college education. Business is business. That's wot's the matter with me.

BRODIE. Ay, so we said when you lost that fight with Newcastle Jemmy, and sent us all home poor men. That was a nick above *you*.

MOORE. Newcastle Jemmy! Muck: that's my opinion of him: muck. I'll mop the floor up with him any day, if so be as you or any on 'em'll make it worth my while." If not, muck! That's my motto. Wot I now ses is, about that 'ere crib at Leslie's, wos I right, I ses? or wos I wrong? That's wot's the matter with you.

BRODIE. You are both right and wrong. You dared me to do it. I was drunk; I was upon my mettle; and I as good as did it. More than that, blackguardly as it was, I enjoyed the doing. He is my friend. He had dined with me that day, and I felt like a man in a story. I climbed his wall, I crawled along his pantry roof, I mounted his window-sill. That one turn of my wrist —you know it!—and the casement was open. It was as dark as the pit, and I thought I'd won my wager, when, phewt! down went something inside, and down went somebody with it. I made one leap, and was off like a rocket. It was my poor friend in person; and if he'd caught and passed me on to the watchman under the window, I should have felt no viler rogue than I feel just now.

MOORE. I s'pose he knows you pretty well by this time?

BRODIE. 'Tis the worst of friendship. Here, Kirsty, fill these glasses. Moore, here's better luck—and a more honourable plant!—next time.

MOORE. Deacon, I looks towards you. But it looks thundering like rotten eggs, don't it?

BRODIE. I think not. I was masked, for one thing, and for another I was as quick as lightning. He suspects me so little that he dined with me this very afternoon.

MOORE. Anyway, you ain't game to try it on again, I'll lay odds on that. Once bit, twice shy. That's your motto.

BRODIE. Right again. I'll put my *alibi* to a better use. And, Badger, one word in your ear: there's no Newcastle Jemmy about *me*. Drop the subject, and for

good, or I shall drop you. (*He rises, and walks backwards and forwards, a little unsteadily; then returns, and sits L., as before.*)

SCENE II

To these, HUNT, *disguised*

He is disguised as a "flying stationer" with a patch over his eye. He sits at table opposite BRODIE'S, *and is served with bread and cheese and beer.*

HAMILTON (*from behind*). The deevil tak' the cairts!

AINSLIE. Hoot, man, dinna blame the cairts.

MOORE. Look here, Deacon, I mean business, I do. (HUNT *looks up at the name of "Deacon."*)

BRODIE. Gad, Badger, I never meet you that you do not. [You have a set of the most commercial intentions!] You make me blush.

MOORE. That's all blazing fine, that is! But wot I ses is, wot about the chips? That's what I ses. I'm after that thundering old Excise Office, I am. That's my motto.

BRODIE. 'Tis a very good motto, and at your lips, Badger, it kind of warms my heart. But it's not mine.

MOORE. Muck! why not?

BRODIE. 'Tis too big and too dangerous. I shirk King George; he has a fat pocket, but he has a long arm. [You pilfer sixpence from him, and it's three hundred reward for you, and a hue and cry from Tophet to the stars.] It ceases to be business; it turns politics, and I'm not a politician, Mr. Moore. (*Rising.*) I'm only Deacon Brodie.

MOORE. All right. I can wait.

BRODIE (*seeing* HUNT). Ha, a new face,—and with a patch! [There's nothing under heaven I like so dearly as a new face with a patch.] Who the devil, sir, are you that own it? And where did you get it? And how much will you take for it second-hand?

HUNT. Well, sir, to tell you the truth (BRODIE *bows*) it's not for sale. But it's my own, and I'll drink your honour's health in anything.

BRODIE. An Englishman, too! Badger, behold a countryman. What are you, and what part of southern Scotland do you come from?

HUNT. Well, your honour, to tell you the honest truth ——

[BRODIE (*bowing*). Your obleeged!]

HUNT. I knows a gentleman when I sees him, your honour [and, to tell your honour the truth ——

BRODIE. *Je vous baise les mains!* (*Bowing.*)]

HUNT. A gentleman as is a gentleman, your honour [is always a gentleman, and to tell you the honest truth] ——

BRODIE. Great heavens! answer in three words, and be hanged to you! What are you, and where are you from?

HUNT. A patter-cove from Seven Dials.

BRODIE. Is it possible? All my life long have I been pining to meet with a patter-cove from Seven Dials! Embrace me, at a distance. [A patter-cove from Seven Dials!] Go, fill yourself as drunk as you dare, at my expense. Anything he likes, Mrs. Clarke. He's a patter-cove from Seven Dials. Hillo! what's all this?

AINSLIE. Dod, I'm for nae mair! (*At back, and rising.*)

PLAYERS. Sit down, Ainslie.—Sit down, Andra.—Ma revenge!

AINSLIE. Na, na, I'm for canny goin'. (*Coming forward with bottle.*) Deacon, let's see your gless.

BRODIE. Not an inch of it.

MOORE. No rotten shirking, Deacon!

[AINSLIE. I'm sayin', man, let's see your gless.

BRODIE. Go to the deuce!]

AINSLIE. But I'm sayin'——

BRODIE. Haven't I to play to-night?

AINSLIE. But, man, ye'll drink to bonnie Jean Watt?

BRODIE. Ay, I'll follow you there. *À la reine de mes amours!* (*Drinks.*) What fiend put this in your way, you hound? You've filled me with raw stuff. By the muckle deil!——

MOORE. Don't hit him, Deacon; tell his mother.

HUNT (*aside*). Oho!

SCENE III

To these, SMITH, RIVERS

SMITH. Where's my beloved? Deakin, my beauty, where are you? Come to the arms of George, and let him introduce you. Capting Starlight Rivers! Capting, the Deakin: Deakin, the Capting. An English nobleman on the grand tour, to open his mind, by the Lard!

RIVERS. Stupendiously pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Deakin, split me!

[BRODIE. We don't often see England's heroes our way, Captain, but when we do, we make them infernally welcome.

RIVERS. Prettily put, sink me! A demned genteel sentiment, stap my vitals!]

BRODIE. Oh Captain! you flatter me. [We Scotsmen have our qualities, I suppose, but we are but rough and ready at the best. There's nothing like your Englishman for genuine distinction. He is nearer France than we are, and smells of his neighbourhood. That d——d thing, the *je ne sais quoi*, too! Lard, Lard, split me! stap my vitals! O such manners are pure, pure, pure. They are, by the shade of Claude Duval!]

RIVERS. Mr. Deakin, Mr. Deakin [this is passatively too much]. What will you sip? Give it the *h*anar of a neam.

BRODIE. By these most hanarable hands now, Captain, you shall not. On such an occasion I could play host with Lucifer himself. Here, Clarke, Mother Midnight! Down with you, Captain! (*forcing him boisterously into a chair.*) I don't know if you can lie, but, sink me! you shall sit. *Drinking, etc., in dumb-show.*

MOORE (*aside to* SMITH). We've nobbled him, Geordie!

SMITH (*aside to* MOORE). As neat as ninepence! He's taking it down like mother's milk. But there'll be wigs on the green to-morrow, Badger! It'll be tuppence and toddle with George Smith.

MOORE. O muck! Who's afraid of him? (*To* AINSLIE.) Hang on, Slinkie.

HUNT (*who is feigning drunkenness, and has overheard; aside*). By Jingo!

[RIVERS. Will you sneeze, Mr. Deakin, sir?

BRODIE. Thanks; I have all the vices, Captain. You

must send me some of your rappee. It is passatively perfect.]

RIVERS. Mr. Deakin, I do myself the *h*anar of a sip to you.

BRODIE. Topsy-turvy with the can!

MOORE (*aside to* SMITH). That made him wink.

BRODIE. Your high and mighty hand, my Captain! Shall we dice — dice — dice? (*Dumb-show between them.*)

AINSLIE (*aside to* MOORE). I'm sayin' ——?

MOORE. What's up now?

AINSLIE. I'm no to gie him the coggit dice?

MOORE. The square ones, rot you! Ain't he got to lose every brass farden?

AINSLIE. What'll like be my share?

MOORE. You mucking well leave that to me.

RIVERS. Well, Mr. Deakin, if you passatively will have me shake a *h*elbow ——

BRODIE. Where are the bones, Ainslie? Where are the dice, Lord George? (AINSLIE *gives the dice and dice-box to* BRODIE; *and privately a second pair of dice.*) Old Fortune's counters the bonnie money-catching, money-breeding bones! Hark to their dry music! Scotland against England! Sit round, you tame devils, and put your coins on me!

SMITH. Easy does it, my lord of high degree! Keep cool.

BRODIE. Cool's the word, Captain — a cool twenty on the first?

RIVERS. Done and done. (*They play.*)

HUNT (*aside to* MOORE, *a little drunk*). Ain't that 'ere Scotch gentleman, your friend, too drunk to play, sir?

MOORE. You hold your jaw; that's what's the matter with you.

AINSLIE. He's waur nor he looks. He's knockit the box aff the table.

SMITH (*picking up box*). That's the way *we* does it. Ten to one and no takers!

BRODIE. Deuces again! More liquor, Mother Clarke!

SMITH. Hooray our side! (*Pouring out*). George and his pal for ever!

BRODIE. Deuces again, by heaven! Another?

RIVERS. Done!

BRODIE. Ten more; money's made to go. On with you!

RIVERS. Sixes.

BRODIE. Deuce-ace. Death and judgment? Double or quits?

RIVERS. Drive on! Sixes.

SMITH. Fire away, brave boys! (*To* MOORE.) It's Tally-ho-the-Grinder, Hump!

BRODIE. Treys! Death and the pit! How much have you got there?

RIVERS. A cool forty-five.

BRODIE. I play you thrice the lot.

RIVERS. Who's afraid?

SMITH. Stand by, Badger!

RIVERS. Cinq-ace.

BRODIE. My turn now. (*He juggles in and uses the second pair of dice.*) Aces! Aces again! What's this? (*Picking up dice.*) Sold! . . . You play false. you hound!

RIVERS. You lie!

BRODIE. In your teeth. (*Overturns table, and goes for him.*)

MOORE. Here, none o' that. (*They hold him back. Struggle.*)

SMITH. Hold on, Deacon!

BRODIE. Let me go. Hands off, I say! I'll not touch him. (*Stands weighing dice in his hand.*) But as for that thieving whinger, Ainslie, I'll cut his throat between this dark and to-morrow's. To the bone. (*Addressing the company.*) Rogues, rogues, rogues! (*Singing without.*) Ha! what's that?

AINSLIE. It's the psalm-singing up by at the Holy Weaver's. And O Deacon, if ye're a Christian man——

THE PSALM WITHOUT:—

> "Lord, who shall stand, if Thou, O Lord,
> Should'st mark iniquity?
> But yet with Thee forgiveness is,
> That feared Thou may'st be."

BRODIE. I think I'll go. "My son the Deacon was aye regular at kirk." If the old man could see his son, the Deacon! I think I'll—— Ay, who *shall* stand? There's the rub! And forgiveness, too? There's a long word for you! I learnt it all lang syne, and now . . . hell and ruin are on either hand of me, and the devil has me by the leg. "My son, the Deacon . . . !" Eh, God! but there's no fool like an old fool! (*Becoming conscious of the others.*) Rogues!

SMITH. Take my arm, Deacon.

BRODIE. Down, dog, down! [Stay and be drunk with

your equals.] Gentlemen and ladies, I have already cursed you pretty heavily. Let me do myself the pleasure of wishing you — a very — good evening. (*As he goes out,* HUNT, *who has been staggering about in the crowd, falls on a settle, as about to sleep.*)

ACT-DROP.

ACT II

TABLEAU IV

Evil and Good

The Stage represents the Deacon's workshop; benches, shavings, tools, boards, and so forth. Doors, C. on the street, and L. into the house. Without, church bells; not a chime, but a slow, broken tocsin.

SCENE I

Brodie (*solus*). My head! my head! It's the sickness of the grave. And those bells go on . . . go on! . . . inexorable as death and judgment. [There they go; the trumpets of respectability, sounding encouragement to the world to do and spare not, and not to be found out. Found out! And to those who are they toll as when a man goes to the gallows.] Turn where I will are pitfalls hell-deep. Mary and her dowry; Jean and her child — my child; the dirty scoundrel Moore; my uncle and his trust; perhaps the man from Bow Street. Debt, vice, cruelty, dishonour, crime; the whole canting, lying, double-dealing, beastly business! "My son the Deacon — Deacon of the Wrights!" My thoughts sicken at it. [Oh, the Deacon, the Deacon! Where's a hat for the Deacon? where's a hat for the Deacon's

headache? (*searching*). This place is a piggery. To be respectable and not to find one's hat.]

SCENE II

To him, JEAN, *a baby in her shawl, C.*

JEAN (*who has entered silently during the Deacon's last words*). It's me, Wullie.

BRODIE (*turning upon her*). What! You here again? [you again!]

JEAN. Deacon, I'm unco vexed.

BRODIE. Do you know what you do? Do you know what you risk? [Is there nothing — nothing! — will make you spare me this idiotic, wanton prosecution?]

JEAN. I was wrong to come yestreen; I ken that fine. But the day it's different; I but to come the day, Deacon, though I ken fine it's the Sabbath, and I think shame to be seen upon the streets.

BRODIE. See here, Jean. You must go now. I'll come to you to-night; I swear that. But now I'm for the road.

JEAN. No till you've heard me, William Brodie. Do ye think I came to pleasure mysel', where I'm no wanted? I've a pride o' my ains.

BRODIE. Jean, I am going now. If you please to stay on alone in this house of mine, where I wish I could say you are welcome, stay (*going*).

JEAN. It's the man frae Bow Street.

BRODIE. Bow Street?

JEAN. I thocht ye would hear me. Ye think little o' me; but it's mebbe a braw thing for you that I think sae muckle o' William Brodie . . . ill as it sets me.

BRODIE. [You don't know what is on my mind, Jeannie, else you would forgive me.] Bow Street?

JEAN. It's the man Hunt: him that was here yestreen for the Fiscal.

BRODIE. Hunt?

JEAN. He kens a hantle. He . . . Ye maunna be angered wi' me, Wullie! I said what I shouldna.

BRODIE. Said? Said what?

JEAN. Just that ye were a guid frien' to me. He made believe he was awfu' sorry for me, because ye gied me nae siller; and I said, "Wha tellt him that?" and that he lee'd.

BRODIE. God knows he did! What next?

JEAN. He was that soft-spoken, butter wouldna melt in his mouth; and he keept aye harp, harpin'; but after that let out, he got neither black nor white frae me. Just that ae word and nae mair; and at the hinder end he just speired straucht out, whaur it was ye got your siller frae.

BRODIE. Where I got my siller?

JEAN. Ay, that was it. "You ken," says he.

BRODIE. Did he? and what said you?

JEAN. I couldna think on naething, but just that he was a gey and clever gentleman.

BRODIE. You should have said I was in trade, and had a good business. That's what you should have said. That's what you would have said had you been worth your salt. But it's blunder, blunder, outside and in [upstairs, downstairs, and in my lady's chamber]. You women! Did he see Smith?

JEAN. Ay, and kennt him.

BRODIE. Damnation!—— No, I'm not angry with you.

But you see what I've to endure for you. Don't cry. [Here's the devil at the door, and we must bar him out as best we can.]

JEAN. God's truth, ye are nae vexed wi' me?

BRODIE. God's truth, I am grateful to you. How is the child? Well? That's right. (*Peeping.*) Poor wee laddie! He's like you, Jean.

JEAN. I aye thocht he was liker you.

BRODIE. Is he? Perhaps he is. Ah, Jeannie, you must see and make him a better man than his father.

JEAN. Eh man, Deacon, the proud wumman I'll be gin he's only half sae guid.

BRODIE. Well, well, if I win through this, we'll see what we can for him between us. (*Leading her out, C.*) And now, go — go — go.

LAWSON (*without, L.*). I ken the way, I ken the way.

JEAN (*starting to door*). It's the Fiscal; I'm awa. (BRODIE, *L.*).

SCENE III

To these, LAWSON, *L.*

LAWSON. A braw day this, William. (*Seeing* JEAN.) Eh Mistress Watt? And what'll have brocht you here?

BRODIE (*seated on bench*). Something, uncle, she lost last night, and she thinks that something she lost is here. *Voilà.*

LAWSON. Why are ye no at the kirk, woman? Do ye gang to the kirk?

JEAN. I'm mebbe no what ye would just ca' reg'lar. Ye see, Fiscal, it's the wean.

LAWSON. A bairn's an excuse; I ken that fine, Mis-

tress Watt. But bairn or name, my woman, ye should be at the kirk. Awa wi' ye! Hear to the bells; they're ringing in. (JEAN *curtsies to both, and goes out C. The bells, which have been ringing quicker, cease.)*

SCENE IV

LAWSON (*to* BRODIE, *returning C. from door*). *Mulier formosa superne,* William: a braw lass, and a decent woman forbye.

BRODIE. I'm no judge, Procurator, but I'll take your word for it. Is she not a tenant of yours?

LAWSON. Ay, ay; a bit house on my land in Liberton's Wynd. Her man's awa, puir body; or they tell me sae; and I'm concerned for her [she's unco bonnie to be left her lane]. But it sets me brawly to be finding faut wi' the puir lass, and me an elder, and should be at the plate. [There'll be twa words about this in the Kirk Session.] However, it's nane of my business that brings me, or I should tak' the mair shame to mysel'. Na, sir, it's for you; it's your business keeps me frae the kirk.

BRODIE. My business, Procurator? I rejoice to see it in such excellent hands.

LAWSON. Ye see, it's this way. I had a crack wi' the laddie, Leslie, *inter pocula* (he took a stirrup-cup wi' me), and he tells me he has askit Mary, and she was to speak to ye hersel'. O, ye needna look sae gash. Did she speak? and what'll you have said to her?

BRODIE. She has not spoken; I have said nothing; and I believe I asked you to avoid the subject.

LAWSON. Ay, I made a note o' that observation, William [and assoilzied mysel']. Mary's a guid lass, and I'm her uncle, and I'm here to be answered. Is it to be ay or no?

BRODIE. It's to be no. This marriage must be quashed; and hark ye, Procurator, you must help me.

LAWSON. Me? ye're daft! And what for why?

BRODIE. Because I've spent the trust-money, and I can't refund it.

LAWSON. Ye reprobate deevil!

BRODIE. Have a care, Procurator. No wry words!

LAWSON. Do you say it to my face, sir? Dod, sir, I'm the Crown Prosecutor.

BRODIE. Right. The Prosecutor for the Crown. And where did you get your brandy?

LAWSON. Eh?

BRODIE. Your brandy! Your brandy, man! Where do you get your brandy? And you a Crown official and an elder!

LAWSON. Whaur the deevil did ye hear that?

BRODIE. Rogues all! Rogues all, Procurator!

LAWSON. Ay, ay. Lord save us! Guidsake, to think o' that noo! . . . Can ye give me some o' that Cognac? I'm . . . I'm sort o' shaken, William, I'm sort o' shaken. Thank you, William! (*Looking piteously at glass.*) *Nunc est bibendum.* (*Drinks.*) Troth, I'm set ajee a bit. Wha the deevil tauld ye?

BRODIE. Ask no questions, brother. We are a pair.

LAWSON. Pair, indeed! Pair, William Brodie! Upon my saul, sir, ye're a brazen-faced man that durst say it to my face! Tak' you care, my bonnie young man, that your craig doesna feel the wecht o' your hurdies.

Keep the plainstanes side o' the gallows. *Via trita, via tuta,* William Brodie!

BRODIE. And the brandy, Procurator? and the brandy?

LAWSON. Ay . . . weel . . . be't sae! Let the brandy bide, man, let the brandy bide! But for you and the trust-money . . . damned! It's felony. *Tutor in rem suam,* ye ken, *tutor in rem suam.* But O man, Deacon, whaur is the siller?

BRODIE. It's gone — O how the devil should I know? But it'll never come back.

LAWSON. Dear, dear! A' gone to the winds o' heaven! Sae ye're an extravagant dog, too. *Prodigus et furiosus!* And that puir lass — eh, Deacon, man, that puir lass! I mind her such a bonny bairn.

BRODIE (*stopping his ears*). Brandy, brandy, brandy, brandy, brandy!

LAWSON. William Brodie, mony's the long day that I've believed in you; prood, prood was I to be the Deacon's uncle; and a sore hearing have I had of it the day. That's past; that's past like Flodden Field; it's an auld sang noo, and I'm an aulder man than when I crossed your door. But mark ye this — mark ye this, William Brodie, I may be no sae guid's I should be; but there's no a saul between the east sea and the wast can lift his een to God that made him, and say I wranged him as ye wrang that lassie. I bless God, William Brodie — ay, though he was like my brother — I bless God that he that got ye has the hand of death upon his hearing, and can win into his grave a happier man than me. And ye speak to me, sir? Think shame — think shame upon your heart!

BRODIE. Rogues all!

LAWSON. You're the son of my sister, William Brodie. Mair than that I stop not to inquire. If the siller is spent, and the honour tint — Lord help us, and the honour tint! — sae be it, I maun bow the head. Ruin shallna come by me. Na, and I'll say mair, William; we have a' our weary sins upon our backs, and maybe I have mair than mony. But, man, if ye could bring *half* the jointure . . . [*potius quam pereas*] . . . for your mither's son? Na? You couldna bring the half? Weel, weel, it's a sair heart I have this day, a sair heart and a weary. If I were a better man mysel' . . . but there, there, it's a sair heart that I have gotten. And the Lord kens I'll help ye if I can. [*Potius quam pereas.*]

SCENE V

BRODIE. Sore hearing, does he say? My hand's wet. But it's victory. Shall it be go? or stay? [I should show them all I can, or they may pry closer than they ought.] Shall I have it out and be done with it? To see Mary at once [to carry bastion after bastion at the charge] — there were the true safety after all! Hurry — hurry's the road to silence now. Let them once get tattling in their parlours, and it's death to me. For I'm in a cruel corner now. I'm down, and I shall get my kicking soon and soon enough. I began it in the lust of life, in a hey-day of mystery and adventure. I felt it great to be a bolder, craftier rogue than the drowsy citizen that called himself my fellow-man. [It was meat and drink to know him in the hollow of my hand, hoarding that I and mine might squander, pinching that

we might wax fat.] It was in the laughter of my heart that I tip-toed into his greasy privacy. I forced the strong-box at his ear while he sprawled beside his wife. He was my butt, my ape, my jumping-jack. And now . . . O fool, fool! [Duped by such knaves as are a shame to knavery, crime's rabble, hell's tatter-demalions!] Shorn to the quick! Rooked to my vitals! And I must thieve for my daily bread like any crawling blackguard in the gutter. And my sister . . . my kind, innocent sister! She will come smiling to me with her poor little love-story, and I must break her heart. Broken hearts, broken lives! . . . I should have died before.

SCENE VI

BRODIE, MARY

MARY (*tapping without*). Can I come in, Will?

BRODIE. O yes, come in, come in! (MARY *enters.*) I wanted to be quiet, but it doesn't matter, I see. You women are all the same.

MARY. O no, Will, they're not all so happy, and they're not all Brodies. But I'll be a woman in one thing. For I've come to claim your promise, dear; and I'm going to be petted and comforted and made much of, altho' I don't need it, and . . . Why, Will, what's wrong with you? You look . . . I don't know what you look like.

BRODIE. O nothing! A splitting head and an aching heart. Well! you've come to speak to me. Speak up. What is it? Come, girl! What is it? Can't you speak?

MARY. Why, Will, what is the matter?

BRODIE. I thought you had come to tell me something. Here I am. For God's sake out with it, and don't stand beating about the bush.

MARY. O be kind, be kind to me.

BRODIE. Kind? I am kind. I'm only ill and worried, can't you see? Whimpering? I knew it! Sit down, you goose! Where do you women get your tears?

MARY. Why are you so cross with me? Oh, Will, you have forgot your sister! Remember, dear, that I have nobody but you. It's your own fault, Will, if you've taught me to come to you for kindness, for I always found it. And I mean you shall be kind to me again. I know you will, for this is my great need, and the day I've missed my mother sorest. Just a nice look, dear, and a soft tone in your voice, to give me courage, for I can tell you nothing till I know that you're my own brother once again.

BRODIE. If you'd take a hint, you'd put it off till tomorrow. But I suppose you won't. On, then, I'm listening. I'm listening!

MARY. Mr. Leslie has asked me to be his wife.

BRODIE. He has, has he?

MARY. And I have consented.

BRODIE. And . . . ?

MARY. You can say that to me? And that is all you have to say?

BRODIE. O no, not all.

MARY. Speak out, sir. I am not afraid.

BRODIE. I suppose you want my consent?

MARY. Can you ask?

BRODIE. I didn't know. You seem to have got on pretty well without it so far.

MARY. O shame on you! shame on you!

BRODIE. Perhaps you may be able to do without it altogether. I hope so. For you'll never have it. . . . Mary! . . . I hate to see you look like that. If I could say anything else, believe me, I would say it. But I have said all; every word is spoken; there's the end.

MARY. It shall not be the end. You owe me explanation; and I'll have it.

BRODIE. Isn't my "No" enough, Mary?

MARY. It might be enough for me; but it is not, and it cannot be, enough for him. He has asked me to be his wife; he tells me his happiness is in my hands — poor hands, but they shall not fail him, if my poor heart should break! If he has chosen and set his hopes upon me, of all women in the world, I shall find courage somewhere to be worthy of the choice. And I dare you to leave this room until you tell me all your thoughts — until you prove that this is good and right.

BRODIE. Good and right? They are strange words, Mary. I mind the time when it was good and right to be your father's daughter and your brother's sister. . . . Now! . . .

MARY. Have I changed? Not even in thought. My father, Walter says, shall live and die with us. He shall only have gained another son. And you — you know what he thinks of you; you know what I would do for you.

BRODIE. Give him up.

MARY. I have told you: not without a reason.

BRODIE. You must.

MARY. I will not.

BRODIE. What if I told you that you could only compass your happiness and his at the price of my ruin?

MARY. Your ruin?

BRODIE. Even so.

MARY. Ruin!

BRODIE. It has an ugly sound, has it not?

MARY. O Willie, what have you done? What have you done? What have you done?

BRODIE. I cannot tell you, Mary. But you may trust me. You must give up this Leslie . . . and at once. It is to save me.

MARY. I would die for you, dear, you know that. But I cannot be false to him. Even for you, I cannot be false to him.

BRODIE. We shall see. Let me take you to your room. Come. And, remember, it is for your brother's sake. It is to save me.

MARY. I am true Brodie. Give me time, and you shall not find me wanting. But it is all so sudden . . . so strange and dreadful! You will give me time, will you not? I am only a woman, and . . . O my poor Walter! It will break his heart! It will break his heart! (*A knock.*)

BRODIE. You hear!

MARY. Yes, yes. Forgive me. I am going. I will go. It is to save you, is it not? To save you. Walter . . . Mr. Leslie . . . O Deacon, Deacon, God forgive you! (*She goes out.*)

BRODIE. Amen. But will He?

SCENE VII

BRODIE, HUNT

HUNT (*hat in hand*). Mr. Deacon Brodie, I believe?

BRODIE. I am he, Mr. ——.

HUNT. Hunt, sir; an officer from Sir John Fielding of Bow Street.

BRODIE. There can be no better passport than the name. In what can I serve you?

HUNT. You'll excuse me, Mr. Deacon.

BRODIE. Your duty excuses you, Mr. Hunt.

HUNT. Your obedient. The fact is, Mr. Deacon [we in the office see a good deal of the lives of private parties; and I needn't tell a gentleman of your experience it's part of our duty to hold our tongues. Now], it's come to my knowledge that you are a trifle jokieous. Of course I know there ain't any harm in that. I've been young myself, Mr. Deacon, and speaking ——

BRODIE. O, but pardon me, Mr. Hunt, I am not going to discuss my private character with you.

HUNT. To be sure you ain't. [And do I blame you? Not me.] But, speaking as one man of the world to another, you naturally see a great deal of bad company.

BRODIE. Not half so much as you do. But I see what you're driving at; and if I can illuminate the course of justice, you may command me. (*He sits, and motions* HUNT *to do likewise.*)

HUNT. I was dead sure of it; and 'and upon 'art, Mr. Deacon, I thank you. Now (*consulting pocketbook*), did you ever meet a certain George Smith?

BRODIE. The fellow they call Jingling Geordie? (HUNT *nods.*) Yes.

HUNT. Bad character.

BRODIE. Let us say . . . disreputable.

HUNT. Any means of livelihood?

BRODIE. I really cannot pretend to guess. I have met the creature at cock-fights [which, as you know, are my weakness]. Perhaps he bets.

HUNT. [Mr. Deacon, from what I know of the gentleman, I should say that if he don't—if he ain't open to any mortal thing—he ain't the man I mean.] He used to be about with a man called Badger Moore.

BRODIE. The boxer?

HUNT. That's him. Know anything of him?

BRODIE. Not much. I lost five pieces on him in a fight; and I fear he sold his backers.

HUNT. Speaking as one admirer of the noble art to another, Mr. Deacon, the losers always do. I suppose the Badger cockfights like the rest of us?

BRODIE. I have met him in the pit.

HUNT. Well, it's a pretty sport. I'm as partial to a main as anybody.

BRODIE. It's not an elegant taste, Mr. Hunt.

HUNT. It costs as much as though it was. And that reminds me, speaking as one sportsman to another, Mr. Deacon, I was sorry to hear that you've been dropping a hatful of money lately.

BRODIE. You are very good.

HUNT. Four hundred in three months, they tell me.

BRODIE. Ah!

HUNT. So they say, sir.

BRODIE. They have a perfect right to say so, Mr. Hunt.

HUNT. And you to do the other thing? Well, I'm a good hand at keeping close myself.

BRODIE. I am not consulting you, Mr. Hunt; 'tis you who are consulting me. And if there is nothing else (*rising*) in which I can pretend to serve you . . . ?

HUNT (*rising*). That's about all, sir, unless you can put me on to anything good in the way of heckle and spur. I'd try to look in.

BRODIE. O, come, Mr. Hunt, if you have nothing to do, frankly and flatly I have. This is not the day for such a conversation; and so good-bye to you. (*A knocking, C.*)

HUNT. Servant, Mr. Deacon. (SMITH *and* MOORE, *without waiting to be answered, open and enter, C. They are well into the room before they observe* HUNT.) [Talk of the Devil, sir!]

BRODIE. What brings you here? (SMITH *and* MOORE, *confounded by the officer's presence, slouch together to right of door.* HUNT, *stopping as he goes out, contemplates the pair, sarcastically. This is supported by* MOORE *with sullen bravado; by* SMITH, *with cringing airiness.*)

HUNT (*digging* SMITH *in the ribs*). Why, you are the very parties I was looking for! (*He goes out, C.*)

SCENE VIII

BRODIE, MOORE, SMITH

MOORE. Wot was that cove here about?

BRODIE (*with folded arms, half-sitting on bench*). He was here about you.

SMITH (*still quite discountenanced*). About us? Scissors! And what did you tell him?

BRODIE (*same attitude*). I spoke of you as I have found you. [I told him you were a disreputable hound, and that Moore had crossed a fight.] I told him you were a drunken ass, and Moore an incompetent and dishonest boxer.

MOORE. Look here, Deacon! Wot's up? Wot I ses is, if a cove's got any thundering grudge agin a cove, why can't he spit it out, I ses.

BRODIE. Here are my answers (*producing purse and dice*). These are both too light. This purse is empty, these dice are not loaded. Is it indiscretion to inquire how you share? Equal with the Captain, I presume?

SMITH. It's as easy as my eye, Deakin. Slink Ainslie got letting the merry glass go round, and didn't know the right bones from the wrong. That's *h*all.

BRODIE. [What clumsy liars you are!

SMITH. In boyhood's hour, Deakin, he were called Old Truthful. Little did he think ——]

BRODIE. What is your errand?

MOORE. Business.

SMITH. After the melancholy games of last night, Deakin, which no one deplores so much as George Smith, we thought we'd trot round — didn't us, Hump? and see how you and your bankers was a-getting on.

BRODIE. Will you tell me your errand?

MOORE. You're dry, ain't you?

BRODIE. Am I?

MOORE. We ain't none of us got a stiver, that's wot's the matter with us.

BRODIE. Is it?

MOORE. Ay, strike me, it is! And wot we've got to is to put up the Excise.

SMITH. It's the last plant in the shrubbery, Deakin,

and it's breaking George the gardener's heart, it is. We really must!

BRODIE. Must we?

MOORE. Must's the thundering word. I mean business, I do.

BRODIE. That's lucky. I don't.

MOORE. O, you don't, don't you?

BRODIE. I do not.

MOORE. Then p'raps you'll tell us wot you thundering well do?

BRODIE. What do I mean? I mean that you and that merry-andrew shall walk out of this room and this house. Do you suppose, you blockheads, that I am blind? I'm the Deacon, am I not? I've been your king and your commander. I've led you, and fed you, and thought for you with this head. And you think to steal a march upon a man like me? I see you through and through [I know you like the clock]; I read your thoughts like print. Brodie, you thought, has money, and won't do the job. Therefore, you thought, we must rook him to the heart. And therefore, you put up your idiot cockney. And now you come round, and dictate, and think sure of your Excise? Sure? Are you sure I'll let you pack with a whole skin? By my soul, but I've a mind to pistol you like dogs. Out of this! Out, I say, and soil my home no more.

MOORE (*sitting*). Now look 'ere. Mr. bloody Deacon Brodie, you see this 'ere chair of yours, don't you? Wot I ses to you is, here I am, I ses, and here I mean to stick. That's my motto. Who the devil are you to do the high and mighty? You make all you can out of us, don't you? and when one your plants get cross, you order us out of the ken? Muck! That's wot I

think of you. Muck! Don't you get coming the nob over me, Mr. Deacon Brodie, or I'll smash you.

BRODIE. You will?

MOORE. Ay will I. If I thundering well swing for it. And as for clearing out? Muck! Here I am, and here I stick. Clear out? You try it on. I'm a man, I am.

BRODIE. This is plain speaking.

MOORE. Plain? Wot about your father as can't walk? Wot about your fine-madam sister? Wot about the stone-jug, and the dock, and the rope in the open street? Is that plain? If it ain't, you let me know, and I'll spit it out so as it'll raise the roof off this 'ere ken. Plain! I'm that cove's master, and I'll make it plain enough for him.

BRODIE. What do you want of me?

MOORE. What do I want of you? Now you speak sense. Leslie's is wot I want of you. The Excise is wot I want of you. Leslie's to-night and the Excise to-morrow. That's wot I want of you, and wot I thundering well mean to get.

BRODIE. Damn you!

MOORE. Amen. But you've got your orders.

BRODIE (*with pistol*). Orders? hey? orders?

SMITH (*between them*). Deacon, Deacon!—Badger, are you mad?

MOORE. Muck! That's my motto. Wot I ses is, has he got his orders or has he not? That's wot's the matter with him.

SMITH. Deacon, half a tick. Humphrey, I'm only a light weight, and you fight at twelve stone ten, but I'm damned if I'm going to stand still and see you hitting a pal when he's down.

MOORE. Muck! That's wot I think of you.

SMITH. He's a cut above us, ain't he? He never sold his backers, did he? We couldn't have done without him, could we? You dry up about his old man, and his sister; and don't go on hitting a pal when he's knocked out of time and cannot hit back, for, damme, I will not stand it.

MOORE. Amen to you. But I'm cock of this here thundering walk, and that cove's got his orders.

BRODIE (*putting pistol on bench*). I give in. I will do your work for you once more. Leslie's to-night and the Excise to-morrow. If that is enough, if you have no more . . . orders, you may count it as done.

MOORE. Fen larks. No rotten shirking, mind.

BRODIE. I have passed you my word. And now you have said what you came to say, you must go. I have business here; but two hours hence I am at your . . . orders. Where shall I await you?

MOORE. What about that woman's place of yours?

BRODIE. Your will is my law.

MOORE. That's good enough. Now, Dook.

SMITH. Bye-bye, my William. Don't forget.

SCENE IX

BRODIE. Trust me. No man forgets his vice, you dogs, or forgives it either. It must be done: Leslie's to-night and the Excise to-morrow. It shall be done. This settles it. They used to fetch and carry for me, and now . . . I've licked their boots, have I? I'm their man, their tool, their chattel. It's the bottom rung of the ladder of shame. I sound with my foot, and there's nothing underneath but the black emptiness of damnation. Ah, Deacon, Deacon, and so this is where you've

been travelling all these years; and it's for this that you learned French! The gallows . . . God help me, it begins to dog me like my shadow. *There's* a step to take! And the jerk upon your spine! How's a man to die with a night-cap on? I've done with this. Over yonder, across the great ocean, is a new land, with new characters, and perhaps new lives. The sun shines, and the bells ring, and it's a place where men live gladly; and the Deacon himself can walk without terror, and begin again like a new-born child. It must be good to see day again and not to fear; it must be good to be one's self with all men. Happy like a child, wise like a man, free like God's angels . . . should I work these hands off and eat crusts, there were a life to make me young and good again. And it's only over the sea! O man, you have been blind, and now your eyes are opened. It was half a life's nightmare, and now you are awake. Up, Deacon, up, it's hope that's at the window! Mary! Mary! Mary!

SCENE X

BRODIE, MARY, OLD BRODIE

(BRODIE *has fallen into a chair, with his face upon the table. Enter* MARY, *by the side door, pushing her father's chair. She is supposed to have advanced far enough for stage purposes before* BRODIE *is aware of her. He starts up, and runs to her.*)

BRODIE. Look up, my lass, look up, and be a woman! I . . . O kiss me, Mary! give me a kiss for my good news.

MARY. Good news, Will? Is it changed?

BRODIE. Changed? Why, the world's a different colour! It was night, and now it's broad day, and I trust myself again. You must wait, dear, wait, and I must work and work; and before the week is out, as sure as God sees me, I'll have made you happy. O you may think me broken, hounds, but the Deacon's not the man to be run down; trust him, he shall turn a corner yet, and leave you snarling! And you, Poll, you. I've done nothing for you yet; but, please God, I'll make your life a life of gold; and wherever I am, I'll have a part in your happiness, and you'll know it, by heaven! and bless me.

MARY. O Willie, look at him; I think he hears you, and is trying to be glad with us.

OLD BRODIE. My son—Deacon—better man than I was.

BRODIE. O for God's sake, hear him!

MARY. He is quite happy, Will, and so am I . . . so am I.

BRODIE. Hear me, Mary. This is a big moment in our two lives. I swear to you by the father here between us that it shall not be fault of mine if this thing fails; if this ship founders you have set your hopes in. I swear it by our father; I swear it by God's judgments.

MARY. I want no oaths, Will.

BRODIE. No, but I do. And prayers, Mary, prayers. Pray night and day upon your knees. I must move mountains.

OLD BRODIE. A wise son maketh — maketh ——

BRODIE. A glad father? And does your son, the Deacon, make you glad? O heaven of heavens, if I were a good man.

ACT-DROP

ACT III

TABLEAU V

King's Evidence

The Stage represents a public place in Edinburgh

SCENE I

Jean, Smith, and Moore

(*They loiter in L., and stand looking about as for somebody not there.* Smith *is hat in hand to* Jean ; Moore *as usual.*)

Moore. Wot did I tell you? Is he 'ere, or ain't he? Now, then. Slink by name and Slink by nature, that's wot's the matter with him.

Jean. He'll no be lang; he's regular enough, if that was a'.

Moore. I'd regular him; I'd break his back.

Smith. Badger, you brute, you hang on to the lessons of your dancing-master. None but the genteel deserves the fair; does they, Duchess?

Moore. O rot! Did I insult the blowen? Wot's the matter with me is Slink Ainslie.

Smith. All right, old Crossed-in-love. Give him forty

winks, and he'll turn up as fresh as clean sawdust and as respectable as a new Bible.

MOORE. That's right enough; but I ain't agoing to stand here all day for him. I'm for a drop of something short, I am. You tell him I showed you that (*showing his doubled fist*). That's wot's the matter with him. (*He lurches out, R.*)

SCENE II

SMITH *and* JEAN, *to whom* HUNT, *and afterwards* MOORE

SMITH (*critically*). No, Duchess, he has not good manners.

JEAN. Ay, he's an impident man.

SMITH. So he is, Jean; and for the matter of that he ain't the only one.

JEAN. Geordie, I want nae mair o' your nonsense, mind.

SMITH. There's our old particular the Deacon, now. Why is he ashamed of a lovely woman? That's not my idea of the Young Chevalier, Jean. If I had luck, we should be married, and retire to our estates in the country, shouldn't us? and go to church and be happy, like the nobility and gentry.

JEAN. Geordie Smith, div ye mean ye'd mairry me?

SMITH. Mean it? What else has ever been the 'umble petition of your honest but well-meaning friend, Roman, and fellow-countryman? I know the Deacon's your man, and I know he's a cut above G. S.; but he won't last, Jean, and I shall.

JEAN. Ay, I'm muckle ta'en up wi' him; wha could help it?

SMITH. Well, and my sort don't grow on apple-trees either.

JEAN. Ye're a fine, cracky, neebourly body, Geordie, if ye wad just let me be.

SMITH. I know I ain't a Scotchman born.

JEAN. I dinna think sae muckle the waur o' ye even for that; if ye would just let me be.

[HUNT (*entering behind, aside*). Are they thick? Anyhow, it's a second chance.]

SMITH. But he won't last, Jean; and when he leaves you, you come to me. Is that your taste in pastry? That's the kind of harticle that I present.

HUNT (*surprising them as in Tableau I.*). Why, you're the very parties I was looking for!

JEAN. Mercy me!

SMITH. Damn it, Jerry, this is unkind.

HUNT. [Now this is what I call a picter of good fortune.] Ain't it strange I should have dropped across you comfortable and promiscuous like this?

JEAN (*stolidly*). I hope ye're middling weel, Mr. Hunt? (*Going.*) Mr. Smith!

SMITH. Mrs. Watt, ma'am! (*Going.*)

HUNT. Hold hard, George. Speaking as one lady's man to another, turn about's fair play. You've had your confab, and now I'm going to have mine. [Not that I've done with you; you stand by and wait.] Ladies first, George, ladies first; that's the size of it. (*To* JEAN, *aside.*) Now, Mrs. Watt, I take it you ain't a natural fool?

JEAN. And thank ye kindly, Mr. Hunt.

SMITH (*interfering*). JEAN . . . !

HUNT (*keeping him off*). Half a tick, George. (*To*

JEAN.) Mrs. Watt, I've a warrant in my pocket. One, two, three: will you peach?

JEAN. Whatten kind of a word'll that be?

SMITH. Mum it is, Jean!

HUNT. *When* you've done dancing, George! (*To* JEAN.) It ain't a pretty expression, my dear, I own it. Will you blow the gaff is perhaps more tenderer.

JEAN. I think ye've a real strange way o' expressin' yoursel'.

HUNT (*to* JEAN). I can't waste time on you, my girl. It's now or never. Will you turn king's evidence?

JEAN. I think ye'll have made a mistake, like.

HUNT. Well, I'm . . . ! (*Separating them.*) [No, not yet; don't push me.] George's turn now. (*To* GEORGE.) George, I've a warrant in my pocket.

SMITH. As per usual, Jerry?

HUNT. Now I want king's evidence.

SMITH. Ah! so you came a cropper with *her*, Jerry. Pride had a fall.

HUNT. A free pardon and fifty shiners down.

SMITH. A free pardon, Jerry?

HUNT. Don't I tell you so?

SMITH. And fifty down? fifty?

HUNT. On the nail.

SMITH. So you came a cropper with her, and then you tried it on with me?

HUNT. I suppose you mean you're a born idiot?

SMITH. What I mean is, Jerry, that you've broke my heart. I used to look up to you like a party might to Julius Cæsar. One more of boyhood's dreams gone pop. (*Enter* MOORE, *L.*)

HUNT (*to both*). Come, then, I'll take the pair, and

be damned to you. Free pardon to both, fifty down and the Deacon out of the way. I don't care for you commoners, it's the Deacon I want.

JEAN (*looking off stolidly*). I think the kirks are scalin'. There seems to be mair people in the streets.

HUNT. O that's the way, is it? Do you know that I can hang you, my woman, and your fancy man as well?

JEAN. I daur say ye would like fine, Mr. Hunt; and here's my service to you. (*Going.*)

HUNT. George, don't you be a tomfool, anyway. Think of the blowen here, and have brains for two.

SMITH (*going*). Ah, Jerry, if you knew anything, how different you would talk! (*They go off together, R.*)

SCENE III

HUNT, MOORE

HUNT. Half a tick, Badger. You're a man of parts, you are; you're solid, you're a true-born Englishman; you ain't a Jerry-go-Nimble like him. Do you know what your pal the Deacon's worth to you? Fifty golden Georges and a free pardon. No questions asked, and no receipts demanded. What do you say? Is it a deal?

MOORE (*as to himself*). Muck. (*He goes out, R.*)

SCENE IV

HUNT, *to whom* AINSLIE

HUNT (*looking after them ruefully*). And these were the very parties I was looking for! [Ah, Jerry, Jerry,

if they knew this at the office!] Well, the market price of that 'ere two hundred is a trifle on the decline and fall. (*Looking L.*) Hullo! (*Slapping his thigh*). Send me victorious! It's king's evidence on two legs. (*Advancing with great cordiality to meet* AINSLIE, *who enters L.*) And so your name's Andrew Ainslie, is it? As I was saying, you're the very party I was looking for. Ain't it strange, now, that I should have dropped across you comfortable and promiscuous like this?

AINSLIE. I dinna ken wha ye are, an' I'm ill for my bed.

HUNT. Let your bed wait, Andrew. I want a little chat with you; just a quiet little sociable wheeze. Just about our friends, you know. About Badger Moore, and George the Dook, and Jemmy Rivers, and Deacon Brodie, Andrew. Particularly Deacon Brodie.

AINSLIE. They're nae friens o' mine's, mister. I ken naething an' naebody. An' noo I'll get to my bed, wulln't I?

HUNT. We're going to have our little talk out first. After that perhaps I'll let you go, and perhaps I won't. It all depends on how we get along together. Now, in a general way, Andrew, and speaking of a man as you find him, I'm all for peace and quietness myself. That's my usual game, Andrew, but when I do make a dust I'm considered by my friends to be rather a good hand at it. So don't you tread upon the worm.

AINSLIE. But I'm sayin'——

HUNT. You leave that to me, Andrew. You shall do your pitch presently. I'm first on the ground, and I lead off. With a question, Andrew. Did you ever hear in your life of such a natural curiosity as a Bow Street Runner?

AINSLIE. Aiblins ay an' aiblins no.

HUNT. "Aiblins ay and aiblins no." Very good indeed, Andrew. Now, I'll ask you another. Did you ever see a Bow Street Runner, Andrew? With the naked eye, so to speak?

AINSLIE. What's your wull?

HUNT. Artful bird! Now since we're getting on so cosy *and* so free, I'll ask you another, Andrew. Should you like to see a Bow Street Runner? (*Producing staff.*) 'Cos, if so, you've only got to cast your eyes on me. Do you queer the red weskit, Andrew? Pretty colour, ain't it? So nice and warm for the winter too. (AINSLIE *dives*, HUNT *collars him.*) No, you don't. Not this time. Run away like that before we've finished our little conversation? You're a nice young man, you are. Suppose we introduce our wrists into these here darbies? Now we shall get along cosier and freer than ever. Want to lie down, do you? All right! anything to oblige.

AINSLIE (*grovelling*). It wasna me, it wasna me. It's bad companions; I've been lost wi' bad companions an' the drink. An' O mister, ye'll be a kind gentleman to a puir lad, an' me sae weak, an' fair rotten wi' the drink an' that. Ye've a bonnie kind heart, my dear, dear gentleman; ye wadna hang sitchan a thing as me. I'm no fit to hang. They ca' me the Cannleworm! An' I'll dae somethin' for ye, wulln't I? An' ye'll can hang the ithers?

HUNT. I thought I hadn't mistook my man. Now, you look here, Andrew Ainslie, you're a bad lot. I've evidence to hang you fifty times over. But the Deacon is my mark. Will you peach, or wont you? You

blow the gaff, and I'll pull you through. You don't, and I'll scragg you as sure as my name's Jerry Hunt.

AINSLIE. I'll dae onything. It's the hanging fleys me. I'll dae onything, onything no to hang.

HUNT. Don't lie crawling there, but get up and answer me like a man. Ain't this Deacon Brodie the fine workman that's been doing all these tip-topping burglaries?

AINSLIE. It's him, mister; it's him. That's the man. Ye're in the very bit. Deacon Brodie. I'll can tak' ye to his vera door.

HUNT. How do you know?

AINSLIE. I gi'ed him a han' wi' them a'. It was him an' Badger Moore, and Geordie Smith; an' they gart me gang wi' them whether or no; I'm that weak, an' whiles I'm donner'd wi' the drink. But I ken a', an' I'll tell a'. And O kind gentleman, you'll speak to their lordships for me, an' I'll no be hangit . . . I'll no be hangit, wull I?

HUNT. But you shared, didn't you? I wonder what share they thought you worth. How much did you get for last night's performance down at Mother Clarke's?

AINSLIE. Just five pund, mister. Five pund. As sure's deith it wadna be a penny mair. No but I askit mair: I did that; I'll no deny it, mister. But Badger kickit me, an' Geordie, he said a bad sweir, an' made he'd cut the liver out o' me, an' catch fish wi't. It's been that way frae the first: an aith an' a bawbee was aye guid eneuch for puir Andra.

HUNT. Well, and why did they do it? I saw Jemmy dance a hornpipe on the table, and booze the company

all round, when the Deacon was gone. What made you cross the fight, and play booty with your own man?

AINSLIE. Just to make him rob the Excise, mister. They're wicked, wicked men.

HUNT. And is he right for it?

AINSLIE. Ay is he.

HUNT. By jingo! When's it for?

AINSLIE. Dear, kind gentleman, I dinna rightly ken: the Deacon's that sair angered wi' me. I'm to get my orders frae Geordie the nicht.

HUNT. O, you're to get your orders from Geordie, are you? Now look here, Ainslie. You know me. I'm Hunt the Runner; I put Jemmy Rivers in the jug this morning; I've got you this evening. I mean to wind up with the Deacon. You understand? All right. Then just you listen. I'm going to take these here bracelets off, and send you home to that celebrated bed of yours. Only, as soon as you've seen the Dook you come straight round to me at Mr. Procurator-Fiscal's, and let me know the Dook's views. One word, mind, and . . . cl'k! It's a bargain?

AINSLIE. Never you fear that. I'll tak' my bannet an' come straucht to ye. Eh God, I'm glad it's nae mair nor that to start wi'. An' may the Lord bless ye, dear, kind gentleman, for your kindness. May the Lord bless ye.

HUNT. You pad the hoof.

AINSLIE (*going out*). An' so I wull, wulln't I not? An' bless, bless ye while there's breath in my body, wulln't I not?

HUNT (*solus*). You're a nice young man, Andrew

Ainslie. Jemmy Rivers and the Deacon in two days! By jingo! (*He dances an instant gravely, whistling to himself.*) Jerry, that 'ere little two hundred of ours is as safe as the bank.

TABLEAU VI

UNMASKED

The Stage represents a room in Leslie's house. A practicable window, C., through which a band of strong moonlight falls into the room. Near the window a strong-box. A practicable door in wing, L. Candlelight.

SCENE I

LESLIE, LAWSON, MARY, *seated.* BRODIE *at back, walking between the windows and the strong-box.*

LAWSON. Weel, weel, weel, weel, nae doubt.

LESLIE. Mr. Lawson, I am perfectly satisfied with Brodie's word; I will wait gladly.

LAWSON. I have nothing to say against that.

BRODIE (*behind* LAWSON). Nor for it.

LAWSON. For it? for it, William? Ye're perfectly richt there. (*To* LESLIE.) Just you do what William tells you; ye canna do better than that.

MARY. Dear uncle, I see you are vexed; but Will and I are perfectly agreed on the best course. Walter and I are young. Oh, we can wait; we can trust each other.

BRODIE (*from behind*). Leslie, do you think it safe to keep this strong-box in your room?

LESLIE. It does not trouble me.

BRODIE. I would not. 'Tis close to the window.

LESLIE. It's on the right side of it.

BRODIE. I give you my advice: I would not.

LAWSON. He may be right there too, Mr. Leslie.

BRODIE. I give him fair warning: it's not safe.

LESLIE. I have a different treasure to concern myself about; if all goes right with that I shall be well contented.

MARY. Walter!

LAWSON. Ay, bairns, ye speak for your age.

LESLIE. Surely, sir, for every age; the ties of blood, of love, of friendship, these are life's essence.

MARY. And for no one is it truer than my uncle. If he live to be a thousand, he will still be young in heart, full of love, full of trust.

LAWSON. Ah, lassie, it's a wicked world.

MARY. Yes, you are out of sorts to-day; we know that.

LESLIE. Admitted that you know more of life, sir; admitted (if you please) that the world is wicked; yet you do not lose trust in those you love.

LAWSON. Weel . . . ye get gliffs, ye ken.

LESLIE. I suppose so. We can all be shaken for a time; but not, I think, in our friends. We are not deceived in them; in the few that we admit into our hearts.

MARY. Never in these.

LESLIE. We know these (*to* BRODIE), and we think the world of them.

BRODIE (*at back*). We are more acquainted with each other's tailors, believe me. You, Leslie, are a very pleasant creature. My uncle Lawson is the Procurator-Fiscal. I—What am I?—I am the Deacon of the

Wrights, my ruffles are generally clean. And you think the world of me? Bravo!

LESLIE. Ay, and I think the world of you.

BRODIE (*at back, pointing to* LAWSON). Ask him.

LAWSON. Hoot-toot. A wheen nonsense: an honest man's an honest man, and a randy thief's a randy thief, and neither mair nor less. Mary, my lamb, it's time you were hame, and had your beauty sleep.

MARY. Do you not come with us?

LAWSON. I gang the ither gate, my lamb. (LESLIE *helps* MARY *on with her cloak, and they say farewell at back.* BRODIE, *for the first time, comes front with* LAWSON.) Sae ye've consented?

BRODIE. As you see.

LAWSON. Ye'll can pay it back?

BRODIE. I will.

LAWSON. And how? That's what I'm wonderin' to mysel'.

BRODIE. Ay, God knows that.

MARY. Come, Will.

SCENE II

LESLIE, LAWSON (*wrapping up*)

LESLIE. I wonder what ails Brodie?

LAWSON. How should I ken? What should I ken that ails him?

LESLIE. He seemed angry even with you.

LAWSON (*impatient*). Hoot awa'.

LESLIE. Of course, I know. But you see, on the very day when our engagement is announced, even

the best of men may be susceptible. You yourself seem not quite pleased.

LAWSON (*with great irritation*). I'm perfectly pleased. I'm perfectly delighted. If I werena an auld man, I'd be just beside mysel' wi' happiness.

LESLIE. Well, I only fancied.

LAWSON. Ye had nae possible excuse to fancy. Fancy? Perfect trash and nonsense. Look at yersel'. Ye look like a ghaist, ye're white-like, ye're black aboot the een; and do ye find me deavin' ye wi' fancies? Or William Brodie either? I'll say that for him.

LESLIE. 'Tis not sorrow that alters my complexion; I've something else on hand. Come, I'll tell you, under seal. I've not been in bed till daylight for a week.

LAWSON. Weel, there's nae sense in the like o' that.

LESLIE. Gad, but there is though. Why, Procurator, this is town's business; this is a municipal affair; I'm a public character. Why? Ah, here's a nut for the Crown Prosecutor! I'm a bit of a party to a robbery.

LAWSON. Guid guide us, man, what d'ye mean?

LESLIE. You shall hear. A week ago to-night, I was passing through this very room without a candle on my way to bed, when . . . what should I see, but a masked man fumbling at that window! How he did the Lord knows. I suspect, Procurator, it was not the first he'd tried . . . for he opened it as handily as his own front door.

LAWSON. Preserve me! Another of thae robberies!

LESLIE. That's it. And, of course, I tried to seize him. But the rascal was too quick. He was down and away in an instant. You never saw a thing so daring and adroit.

LAWSON. Is that a'? Ye're a bauld lad, I'll say that for ye. I'm glad it wasna waur.

LESLIE. Yes, that's all plain sailing. But here's the hitch. Why didn't I tell the Procurator-Fiscal? You never thought of that.

LAWSON. No, man. Why?

LESLIE. Aha! There's the riddle. Will you guess? No? . . . I thought I knew the man.

LAWSON. What d'ye say?

LESLIE. I thought I knew him.

LAWSON. Wha was't?

LESLIE. Ah, there you go beyond me. That I cannot tell.

LAWSON. As God sees ye, laddie, are ye speaking truth?

LESLIE. Well . . . of course!

LAWSON. The haill truth?

LESLIE. All of it. Why not?

LAWSON. Man, I'd a kind o' gliff.

LESLIE. Why, what were you afraid of? Had you a suspicion?

LAWSON. Me? Me a suspicion? Ye're daft, sir; and me the Crown offeecial! . . . Eh man, I'm a' shakin' . . . And sae ye thocht ye kennt him?

LESLIE. I did that. And what's more, I've sat every night in case of his return. I promise you, Procurator, he shall not slip me twice. Meanwhile I'm worried and put out. You understand how such a fancy will upset a man. I'm uneasy with my friends and on bad terms with my own conscience. I keep watching, spying, comparing, putting two and two together, hunting for resemblances until my head goes round.

It's like a puzzle in a dream. Only yesterday I thought I had him. And who d' you think it was?

LAWSON. Wha? Wha was't? Speak, Mr. Leslie, speak. I'm an auld man; dinna forget that.

LESLIE. I name no names. It would be unjust to him; and, upon my word, it was so silly it would be unfair to me. However, here I sit, night after night. I mean him to come back; come back he shall; and I'll tell you who he was next morning.

LAWSON. Let sleeping dogs lie, Mr. Leslie; ye dinna ken what ye micht see. And then, leave him alane, he'll come nae mair. And sitting up a' nicht . . . it's a *factum imprestabile*, as we say: a thing impossible to man. Gang ye to your bed, like a guid laddie, and sleep lang and soundly, and bonnie, bonnie dreams to ye! (*Without.*) Let sleeping dogs lie, and gang ye to your bed.

SCENE III

LESLIE

LESLIE (*calling*). In good time, never fear! (*He carefully bolts and chains the door.*) The old gentleman seems upset. What for, I wonder? Has he had a masked visitor? Why not? It's the fashion. Out with the lights. (*Blows out the candles. The stage is only lighted by the moon through the window.*) He is sure to come, one night or other. He must come. Right or wrong, I feel it in the air. Man, but I know you, I know you somewhere. That trick of the shoulders, the hang of the clothes — whose are they? Where have I seen them? And then, that single look of the

eye, that one glance about the room as the window opened . . . it is almost friendly; I have caught it over the glass's rim! If it should be . . . his? No, his it is not.

WATCHMAN (*without*). Past ten o'clock, and a fine moonlight night.

ANOTHER (*further away*). Past ten o'clock, and all's well.

LESLIE. Past ten? Ah, there's a long night before you and me, watchmen. Heavens, what a trade! But it will be something to laugh over with Mary and . . . with him? Damn it, the delusion is too strong for me. It's a thing to be ashamed of. "We Brodies": how she says it! "We Brodies and our Deacon": what a pride she takes in it, and how good it sounds to me! "Deacon of his craft, sir, Deacon of the . . ." (BRODIE, *masked, appears without at the window, which he proceeds to force.*) Ha! I knew he'd come. I was sure of it. (*He crouches near and nearer to the window, keeping in the shade.*) And I know you too. I swear I know you.

SCENE IV

BRODIE, LESLIE

BRODIE *enters by the window with assurance and ease, closes it silently, and proceeds to traverse the room. As he moves,* LESLIE *leaps upon and grapples him.*

LESLIE. Take off that mask!

BRODIE. Hands off!

LESLIE. Take off the mask!

BRODIE. Leave go, by God, leave go!

LESLIE. Take it off!

BRODIE (*overpowered*). Leslie . . .

LESLIE. Ah! you know me! (*Succeeds in tearing off the mask.*) Brodie!

BRODIE (*in the moonlight*). Brodie.

LESLIE. You . . . you, Brodie, you?

BRODIE. Brodie, sir, Brodie as you see.

LESLIE. What does it mean? What does it mean, my God? Were you here before? Is this the second time? Are you a thief, man? are you a thief? Speak, speak, or I'll kill you.

BRODIE. I am a thief.

LESLIE. And my friend, my own friend, and . . . Mary, Mary! . . . Deacon, Deacon, for God's sake, no!

BRODIE. God help me!

LESLIE. "We Brodies! We Brodies!"

BRODIE. Leslie ——

LESLIE. Stand off! Don't touch me! Your're a thief!

BRODIE. Leslie, Leslie ——

LESLIE. A thief's sister! Why are you here? why are you here? Tell me! Why do you not speak? Man, I know you of old. Are you Brodie, and have nothing to say?

BRODIE. To say? Not much — God help me — and commonplace, commonplace like sin. I was honest once; I made a false step; I couldn't retrace it; and . . . that is all.

LESLIE. You have forgot the bad companions!

BRODIE. I did forget them. They were there.

LESLIE. Commonplace! Commonplace! Do you

speak to me, do you reason with me, do you make excuses? You — a man found out, shamed, a liar, a thief — a man that's killed me, killed this heart in my body; and you speak! What am I to do? I hold your life in my hand; have you thought of that? What am I to do?

BRODIE. Do what you please; you have me trapped.

(JEAN WATT *is heard singing without two bars of "Wanderin' Willie," by way of signal.*)

LESLIE. What is that?

BRODIE. A signal.

LESLIE. What does it mean?

BRODIE. Danger to me; there is some one coming.

LESLIE. Danger to you?

BRODIE. Some one is coming. What are you going to do with me? (*A knock at the door.*)

LESLIE (*after a pause*). Sit down. (*Knocking.*)

BRODIE. What are you going to do with me?

LESLIE. Sit down. (BRODIE *sits in darkest part of stage.* LESLIE *opens door, and admits* LAWSON. *Door open till end of Act.*)

SCENE V

BRODIE, LAWSON, LESLIE

LAWSON. This is an unco' time to come to your door; but eh, laddie, I couldna bear to think o' ye sittin' your lane in the dark.

LESLIE. It was very good of you.

LAWSON. I'm no very fond of playing hidee in the dark mysel'; and noo that I'm here ——

LESLIE. I will give you a light. (*He lights the candles. Lights up.*)

LAWSON. God A'michty! William Brodie!

LESLIE. Yes, Brodie was good enough to watch with me.

LAWSON. But he gaed awa' . . . I dinna see . . . an' Lord be guid to us, the window's open!

LESLIE. A trap we laid for them: a device of Brodie's.

BRODIE (*to* LAWSON). Set a thief to catch a thief. (*Passing to* LESLIE, *aside.*) Walter Leslie, God will reward. (JEAN *signals again.*)

LAWSON. I dinna like that singin' at siccan a time o' the nicht.

BRODIE. I must go.

LAWSON. Not one foot o' ye. I'm ower glad to find ye in guid hands. Ay, ye dinna ken how glad.

BRODIE (*aside to* LESLIE). Get me out of this. There's a man there will stick at nothing.

LESLIE. Mr. Lawson, Brodie has done his shift. Why should we keep him? (JEAN *appears at the door, and signs to* BRODIE.)

LAWSON. Hoots! this is my trade. That's a bit o' "Wanderin' Willie." I've had it before me in precognitions; the same stave has been used for a signal by some o' the very warst o' them.

BRODIE (*aside to* LESLIE.) Get me out of this. I'll never forget to-night. (JEAN *at door again.*)

LESLIE. Well, good-night, Brodie. When shall we meet again?

LAWSON. Not one foot o' him. (JEAN *at door.*) I tell you, Mr. Leslie——

SCENE VI

To these, JEAN

JEAN (*from the door*). Wullie, Wullie!

LAWSON. Guid guide us, Mrs. Watt! A dacent wumman like yoursel'! Whatten a time o' nicht is this to come to folks' door?

JEAN (*to* BRODIE). Hawks, Wullie, hawks!

BRODIE. I suppose you know what you've done, Jean?

JEAN. I *had* to come, Wullie, he wadna wait another minit. He wad have come himsel'.

BRODIE. This is my mistress.

LAWSON. William, dinna tell me nae mair.

BRODIE. I have told you so much. You may as well know all. That good man knows it already. Have you issued a warrant for me . . . . yet?

LAWSON. No, no, man: not another word.

BRODIE (*pointing to the window*). That is my work. I am the man. Have you drawn the warrant?

LAWSON (*breaking down*). Your father's son!

LESLIE (*to* LAWSON). My good friend! Brodie, you might have spared the old man this.

BRODIE. I might have spared him years ago; and you and my sister, and myself. I might . . . would God I had! (*Weeping himself.*) Don't weep, my good old friend; I was lost long since; don't think of me; don't pity me; don't shame me with your pity! I began this when I was a boy. I bound the millstone round my neck; [it is irrevocable now,] and you must all suffer

. . . all suffer for me! . . . [for this suffering remnant of what was once a man]. O God, that I can have fallen to stand here as I do now. My friend lying to save me from the gallows; my second father weeping tears of blood for my disgrace! And all for what? By what? Because I had an open hand, because I was a selfish dog, because I loved this woman.

JEAN. O Wullie, and she lo'ed ye weel! But come near me nae mair, come near me nae mair, my man; keep wi' your ain folks . . . your ain dacent folks.

LAWSON. Mistress Watt, ye shall sit rent free as lang's there's breath in William Lawson's body.

LESLIE. You can do one thing still . . . for Mary's sake. You can save yourself; you must fly.

BRODIE. It is my purpose; the day after to-morrow. It cannot be before. Then I will fly; and O, as God sees me, I will strive to make a new and a better life, and to be worthy of your friendship, and of your tears . . . your tears. And to be worthy of you too, Jean; for I see now that the bandage has fallen from my eyes; I see myself, O how unworthy even of you.

LESLIE. Why not to-night?

BRODIE. It cannot be before. There are many considerations. I must find money.

JEAN. Leave me, and the wean. Dinna fash yoursel' for us.

LESLIE (*opening the strong-box, and pouring gold upon the table*). Take this and go at once.

BRODIE. Not that . . . not the money that I came to steal!

LAWSON. Tak' it, William; I'll pay him.

BRODIE. It is in vain. I cannot leave till I have said.

There is a man; I must obey him. If I slip my chain till he has done with me, the hue and cry will blaze about the country; every outport will be shut; I shall return to the gallows. He is a man that will stick at nothing.

SCENE VII

To these, MOORE

MOORE. Are you coming?

BRODIE. I am coming.

MOORE (*appearing in the door*). Do you want us all to get thundering well scragged?

BRODIE (*going*). There is my master.

ACT-DROP

ACT IV

TABLEAU VII

The Robbery

The Stage represents the outside of the Excise Office in Chessel's Court. At the back, L. C., an archway opening on the High Street. The door of the Excise in wing, R.; the opposite side of the stage is lumbered with barrels, packing-cases, etc. Moonlight; the Excise Office casts a shadow over half the stage. A clock strikes the hour. A round of the City Guard, with halberts, lanterns, etc., enters and goes out again by the arch, after having examined the fastenings of the great door and the lumber on the left. Cry without in the High Street: "Ten by the bell, and a fine clear night." *Then enter cautiously by the arch,* Smith *and* Moore, *with* Ainslie *loaded with tools.*

SCENE I

Smith, Moore, Ainslie

Smith (*entering first*). Come on. Coast clear.

Moore (*after they have come to the front*). Ain't he turned up yet?

Smith (*to* Ainslie). Now Maggot! The fishing's a going to begin.

Ainslie. Dinna cangle, Geordie. My back's fair broke.

MOORE. O muck! Hand out them pieces.

SMITH. All right, Humptious! (*To* AINSLIE.) You're a nice old sort for a rag-and-bone man: can't hold a bag open! (*Taking out tools.*) Here they was. Here are the bunchums, one *and* two; and jolly old keys was they. Here's the picklocks, crowbars, and here's Lord George's pet bull's eye, his old and valued friend, the Cracksman's treasure!

MOORE. Just like you. Forgot the rotten centrebit.

SMITH. That's all you know. Here she is, bless her! Portrait of George as a gay hironmonger.

MOORE. O rot! Hand it over, and keep yourself out of that there thundering moonlight.

SMITH (*lighting lantern*). All right, old mumble-peg. Don't you get carried away by the fire of old Rome. That's your motto. Here are the tools; a perfect picter of the sublime and beautiful; and all I hope is, that our friend and pitcher, the Deakin, will make a better job of it than he did last night. If he don't, I shall retire from the business — that's all; and it'll be George and his little wife and a black footman till death do us part.

MOORE. O muck! You're all jaw like a sheep's jimmy. That's my opinion of you. When did you see him last?

SMITH. This morning; and he looked as if he was rehearsing for his own epitaph. I never see such a change in a man. I gave him the office for to-night; and was he grateful? Did he weep upon my faithful bosom? No; he smiled upon me like a portrait of the dear departed. I see his 'art was far away; and it broke my own to look at him.

MOORE. Muck! Wot I ses is, if a cove's got that much of the nob about him, wot's the good of his working single-handed? That's wot's the matter with him.

SMITH. Well, old Father Christmas, he ain't single-handed to-night, is he?

MOORE. No, he ain't; he's got a man with him to-night.

SMITH. Pardon me, Romeo; two men, I think?

MOORE. A man wot means business. If I'd a'bin with him last night, it ain't psalm-singin' would have got us off. Psalm-singin'? Muck! Let 'em try it on with me.

AINSLIE. Losh me, I heard a noise. (*Alarm; they crouch into the shadow and listen.*)

SMITH. All serene. (*To* AINSLIE.) Am I to cut that liver out of you? Now, am I? (*A whistle.*) 'St! here we are. (*Whistles a modulation, which is answered.*)

SCENE II

To these BRODIE

MOORE. Waiting for you, Deacon.

BRODIE. I see. Everything ready?

SMITH. All a-growing and a-blowing.

BRODIE. Give me the light. (*Briefly examines tools and door with bull's eye.*) You, George, stand by, and hand up the pieces. Ainslie, take the glim. Moore, out and watch.

MOORE. I didn't come here to do sentry-go, I didn't.

BRODIE. You came here to do as I tell you. (MOORE

goes up slowly.) Second bunch, George. I know the lock. Steady with the glim. (*At work.*) No good. Give me the centrebit.

SMITH. Right. (*Work continues.* AINSLIE *drops lantern.*)

BRODIE. Curse you! (*Throttling and kicking him.*) You shake, and you shake, and you can't even hold a light for your betters. Hey?

AINSLIE. Eh Deacon, Deacon . . .

SMITH. Now Ghost! (*With lantern.*)

BRODIE. 'St, Moore!

MOORE. Wot's the row?

BRODIE. Take you the light.

MOORE (*to* AINSLIE). Wo' j' yer shakin' at? (*Kicks him.*)

BRODIE (*to* AINSLIE). Go you, and see if you're good at keeping watch. Inside the arch. And if you let a footfall pass, I'll break your back. (AINSLIE *retires.*) Steady with the light. (*At work with centrebit.*) Hand up number four, George. (*At work with picklock.*) That has it.

SMITH. Well done, our side.

BRODIE. Now the crowbar! (*At work.*) That's it. Put down the glim, Badger, and help at the wrench. Your whole weight, men! Put your backs to it! (*While they work at the bar,* BRODIE *stands by, dusting his hands with a pocket-handkerchief. As the door opens.*) *Voilà!* In with you.

MOORE (*entering with light*). Mucking fine work too, Deacon!

BRODIE. Take up the irons, George!

SMITH. How about the P(h)antom?

BRODIE. Leave him to me. I'll give him a look. (*Enters office.*)

SMITH (*following*). Houp-là!

SCENE III

AINSLIE; *afterwards* BRODIE; *afterwards* HUNT *and* OFFICERS.

AINSLIE. Ca' ye that mainners? Ye're grand gentry by your way o't! Eh, sirs, my hench! Ay, that was the Badger. Man, but ye'll look bonnie hangin'! (*A faint whistle.*) Lord's sake, what's thon? Ay, it'll be Hunt an' his lads. (*Whistle repeated.*) Losh me, what gars him whustle, whustle? Does he think me deaf? (*Goes up.* BRODIE *enters from office, stands an instant, and sees him making a signal through the arch.*)

BRODIE. Rats! Rats! (*Hides L. among lumber. Enter noiselessly through arch* HUNT *and* OFFICERS.)

HUNT. Birds caught?

AINSLIE. They're a' ben the house, mister.

HUNT. All three?

AINSLIE. The hale set, mister.

BRODIE. Liar!

HUNT. Mum, lads, and follow me. (*Exit, with his men, into office.* BRODIE *seen with dagger.*)

HUNT. In the King's name!
MOORE. Muck!
SMITH. Go it, Badger.
HUNT. Take 'em alive, boys!
} (*Within.*)

AINSLIE. Eh, but that's awfu'. (*The Deacon leaps out and stabs him. He falls without a cry.*)

BRODIE. Saved! (*He goes out by the arch.*)

SCENE IV

HUNT *and* OFFICERS; *with* SMITH *and* MOORE *handcuffed. Signs of a severe struggle*

HUNT (*entering.*) Bring 'em along, lads! (*Looking at prisoners with lantern.*) Pleased to see you again, Badger. And you too, George. But I'd rather have seen your principal. Where's he got to?

MOORE. To hell, I hope.

HUNT. Always the same pretty flow of language, I see, Hump. (*Looking at burglary with lantern.*) A very tidy piece of work, Dook; very tidy! Much too good for you. Smacks of a fine tradesman. It *was* the Deacon, I suppose?

SMITH. You ought to know G. S. better by this time, Jerry.

HUNT. All right, your Grace: we'll talk it over with the Deacon himself. Where's the jackal? Here, you, Ainslie! Where are you? By jingo, I thought as much. Stabbed to the heart and dead as a herring!

SMITH. Bravo!

HUNT. More of the Deacon's work, I guess? Does him credit too, don't it, Badger?

MOORE. Muck. Was that the thundering cove that peached?

HUNT. That was the thundering cove.

MOORE. And is he corpsed?

HUNT. I should just about reckon he was.

MOORE. Then, damme, I don't mind swinging!

HUNT. We'll talk about that presently. M'Intyre and Stewart, you get a stretcher, and take that rubbish to

the office. Pick it up; it's only a dead informer. Hand these two gentlemen over to Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, with Mr. Jerry Hunt's compliments. Johnstone and Syme, you come along with me. I'll bring the Deacon round myself.

ACT-DROP

ACT V

TABLEAU VIII

The Open Door

The Stage represents the Deacon's room, as in Tableau I. Fire light. Stage dark. A pause. Then knocking at the door, C. Cries without of "Willie!" "Mr. Brodie!" *The door is burst open.*

SCENE I

Doctor, Mary, *a* Maidservant *with lights*

Doctor. The apartment is unoccupied.

Mary. Dead, and he not here!

Doctor. The bed has not been slept in. The counterpane is not turned down.

Mary. It is not true; it cannot be true.

Doctor. My dear young lady, you must have misunderstood your brother's language.

Mary. O no; that I did not. That I am sure I did not.

Doctor (*looking at door*). The strange thing is . . . . the bolt.

Servant. It's unco strange.

Doctor. Well, we have acted for the best.

Servant. Sir, I dinna think this should gang nae further.

DOCTOR. The secret is in our keeping. Affliction is enough without scandal.

MARY. Kind heaven, what does it mean?

DOCTOR. I think there is no more to be done.

MARY. I am here alone, Doctor; you pass my uncle's door?

DOCTOR. The Procurator-Fiscal? I shall make it my devoir. Expect him soon. (*Goes out with* MAID.)

MARY (*hastily searches the room*). No, he is not there. She was right! O father, you can never know, praise God!

SCENE II

MARY, *to whom* JEAN *and afterwards* LESLIE

JEAN (*at door*). Mistress . . . . !

MARY. Ah! Who is there? Who are you?

JEAN. Is he no hame yet? I'm aye waitin' on him.

MARY. Waiting for him? Do you know the Deacon? You?

JEAN. I maun see him. Eh, lassie, it's life and death.

MARY. Death . . . O my heart!

JEAN. I maun see him, bonnie leddie. I'm a puir body, and no fit to be seen speakin' wi' the likes o' you. But O lass, ye are the Deacon's sister, and ye hae the Deacon's e'en, and for the love of the dear kind Lord, let's in and hae a word wi' him ere it be ower late. I'm bringin' siller.

MARY. Siller? You? For him? O father, father, if you could hear! What are you? What are you . . . to him?

JEAN. I'll be the best frien' 'at ever he had; for, O dear leddie, I wad gie my bluid to help him.

MARY. And the . . . . the child?

JEAN. The bairn?

MARY. Nothing! O nothing! I am in trouble, and I know not what I say. And I cannot help you; I cannot help you if I would. He is not here; and I believed he was; and ill . . . ill; and he is not—he is . . . . O, I think I shall lose my mind!

JEAN. Ay, it's unco business.

MARY. His father is dead within there . . . dead, I tell you . . . dead!

JEAN. It's mebbe just as weel.

MARY. Well? Well? Has it come to this? O Walter, Walter! come back to me, or I shall die. (LESLIE *enters, C.*)

LESLIE. Mary, Mary! I hoped to have spared you this. (*To* JEAN.) What—you? Is he not here?

JEAN. I'm aye waitin' on him.

LESLIE. What has become of him? Is he mad? Where is he?

JEAN. The Lord A'michty kens, Mr. Leslie. But I maun find him; I maun find him.

SCENE III

MARY, LESLIE

MARY. O Walter, Walter! What does it mean?

LESLIE. You have been a brave girl all your life, Mary; you must lean on me . . . you must trust in me . . . and be a brave girl till the end.

MARY. Who is she? What does she want with *him?* And he . . . where is he? Do you know that my father is dead, and the Deacon not here? Where has he gone? He may be dead, too. Father, brother . . . O God, it is more than I can bear!

LESLIE. Mary, my dear, dear girl . . . when will you be my wife?

MARY. O, do not speak . . . not speak . . . of it to-night. Not to-night! O not to-night!

LESLIE. I know, I know, dear heart! And do you think that I whom you have chosen, I whose whole life is in your love — do you think that I would press you now if there were not good cause?

MARY. Good cause! Something has happened. Something has happened . . . . to him! Walter . . . ! Is he . . . . dead?

LESLIE. There are worse things in the world than death. There is . . . . O Mary, he is your brother!

MARY. What? . . . . Dishonour! . . . . The Deacon! . . . . My God!

LESLIE. My wife, my wife!

MARY. No, no! Keep away from me. Don't touch me. I'm not fit . . . not fit to be near you. What has he done? I am his sister. Tell me the worst. Tell me the worst at once.

LESLIE. That, if God wills, dear, that you shall never know. Whatever it be, think that I knew it all, and only loved you better; think that your true husband is with you, and you are not to bear it alone.

MARY. My husband? . . . Never.

LESLIE. Mary . . . !

MARY. You forget, you forget what I am. I am his sister. I owe him a lifetime of happiness and love; I

owe him even you. And whatever his fault, however ruinous his disgrace, he is my brother — my own brother — and my place is still with him.

LESLIE. Your place is with me — is with your husband. With me, with me; and for his sake most of all. What can you do for him alone? how can you help him alone? It wrings my heart to think how little. But together is different. Together . . . . ! Join my strength, my will, my courage to your own, and together we may save him.

MARY. All that is over. Once I was blessed among women. I was my father's daughter, my brother loved me, I lived to be your wife. Now . . . . ! My father is dead, my brother is shamed; and you . . . . O how could I face the world, how could I endure myself, if I preferred my happiness to your honour?

LESLIE. What is my honour but your happiness? In what else does it consist? Is it in denying me my heart? is it in visiting another's sin upon the innocent? Could I do that, and be my mother's son? Could I do that, and bear my father's name? Could I do that, and have ever been found worthy of you?

MARY. It is my duty . . . my duty. Why will you make it so hard for me? So hard, Walter, so hard!

LESLIE. Do I pursue you only for your good fortune, your beauty, the credit of your friends, your family's good name? That were not love, and I love you. I love you, dearest, I love you. Friend, father, brother, husband . . . I must be all these to you. I am a man who can love well.

MARY. Silence . . . in pity! I cannot . . . O, I cannot bear it.

LESLIE. And say it was I who had fallen. Say I had

played my neck and lost it . . . that I were pushed by the law to the last limits of ignominy and despair. Whose love would sanctify my jail to me? whose pity would shine upon me in the dock? whose prayers would accompany me to the gallows? Whose but yours? Yours! . . . And you would entreat me — me! — to do what you shrink from even in thought, what you would die ere you attempted in deed!

MARY. Walter . . . on my knees . . . no more, no more!

LESLIE. My wife! my wife! Here on my heart! It is I that must kneel . . . I that must kneel to you.

MARY. Dearest! . . . Husband! You forgive him? O, you forgive him?

LESLIE. He is my brother now. Let me take you to our father. Come.

SCENE IV

After a pause, BRODIE, *through the window*

BRODIE. Saved! And the alibi! Man, but you've been near it this time — near the rope, near the rope. Ah boy, it was your neck, your neck you fought for. They were closing hell-doors upon me, swift as the wind, when I slipped through and shot for heaven! Saved! The dog that sold me, I settled him; and the other dogs are staunch. Man, but your alibi will stand! Is the window fast? The neighbours must not see the Deacon, the poor, sick Deacon, up and stirring at this time o' night. Ay, the good old room in the good, cozy old house . . . and the rat a dead rat, and all saved. (*He lights the candles.*) Your

hand shakes, sir? Fie! And you saved, and you snug and sick in your bed, and *it* but a dead rat after all? (*He takes off his hanger and lays it on the table.*) Ay, it was a near touch. Will it come to the dock? If it does! You've a tongue, and you've a head, and you've an alibi; and your alibi will stand. (*He takes off his coat, takes out the dagger, and with a gesture of striking.*) Home! He fell without a sob. "He breaketh them against the bosses of his buckler!" (*Lays the dagger on the table.*) Your alibi . . . ah Deacon, that's your life! . . . your alibi, your alibi. (*He takes up a candle and turns towards the door.*) O! . . . . Open, open, open! Judgment of God, the door is open!

SCENE V

BRODIE, MARY.

BRODIE. Did you open the door?

MARY. I did.

BRODIE. You . . . . you opened the door?

MARY. I did open it.

BRODIE. Were you . . . alone?

MARY. I was not. The servant was with me; and the doctor.

BRODIE. O . . . the servant . . . and the doctor. Very true. Then it's all over town by now. The servant and the doctor. The doctor? What doctor? Why the doctor?

MARY. My father is dead. O Will, where have you been?

BRODIE. Your father is dead. O yes! He's dead, is

he? Dead. Quite right. Quite right. . . . How did you open the door? It's strange. I bolted it.

MARY. We could not help it, Will, now could we? The doctor forced it. He had to, had he not?

BRODIE. The doctor forced it? The doctor? Was he here? He forced it? He?

MARY. We did it for the best; it was I who did it . . . I, your own sister. And O Will, my Willie, where have you been? You have not been in any harm, any danger?

BRODIE. Danger? O my young lady, you have taken care of that. It's not danger now, it's death. Death? Ah! Death! Death! Death! (*Clutching the table. Then, recovering as from a dream.*) Death? Did you say my father was dead? My father? O my God, my poor old father! Is he dead, Mary? Have I lost him? is he gone? O, Mary dear, and to think of where his son was!

MARY. Dearest, he is in heaven.

BRODIE. Did he suffer?

MARY. He died like a child. Your name . . . it was his last.

BRODIE. My name? Mine? O Mary, if he had known! He knows now. He knows; he sees us now . . . sees me! Ay, and sees you, left how lonely!

MARY. Not so, dear; not while you live. Wherever you are, I shall not be alone, so you live.

BRODIE. While I live? I? The old house is ruined, and the old master dead, and I! . . . O Mary, try and believe I did not mean that it should come to this; try and believe that I was only weak at first. At first? And now! The good old man dead, the kind sister

ruined, the innocent boy fallen, fallen . . .! You will be quite alone; all your old friends, all the old faces, gone into darkness. The night (*with a gesture*) . . . it waits for me. You will be quite alone.

MARY. The night!

BRODIE. Mary, you must hear. How am I to tell her, and the old man just dead! Mary, I was the boy you knew; I loved pleasure, I was weak; I have fallen . . . low . . . lower than you think. A beginning is so small a thing! I never dreamed it would come to this . . . . this hideous last night.

MARY. Willie, you must tell me, dear. I must have the truth . . . the kind truth . . . at once . . . in pity.

BRODIE. Crime. I have fallen. Crime.

MARY. Crime?

BRODIE. Don't shrink from me. Miserable dog that I am, selfish hound that has dragged you to this misery . . . you and all that loved him . . . think only of my torments, think only of my penitence, don't shrink from me.

MARY. I do not care to hear, I do not wish, I do not mind; you are my brother. What do I care? How can I help you?

BRODIE. Help? help *me?* You would not speak of it, not wish it, if you knew. My kind good sister, my little playmate, my sweet friend! Was I ever unkind to you till yesterday? Not openly unkind? you'll say that when I am gone.

MARY. If you have done wrong, what do I care? If you have failed, does it change my twenty years of love and worship? Never!

BRODIE. Yet I must make her understand . . . . !

MARY. I am your true sister, dear. I cannot fail, I will never leave you, I will never blame you. Come! (*Goes to embrace.*)

BRODIE (*recoiling*). No, don't touch me, not a finger, not that, anything but that!

MARY. Willie, Willie!

BRODIE (*taking the bloody dagger from the table*). See, do you understand that?

MARY. Ah! What, what is it!

BRODIE. Blood. I have killed a man.

MARY. You? . . . .

BRODIE. I am a murderer; I was a thief before. Your brother . . . the old man's only son!

MARY. Walter, Walter, come to me!

BRODIE. Now you see that I must die; now you see that I stand upon the grave's edge, all my lost life behind me, like a horror to think upon, like a frenzy, like a dream that is past. And you, you are alone. Father, brother, they are gone from you; one to heaven, one . . . . !

MARY. Hush, dear, hush! Kneel, pray; it is not too late to repent. Think of our father, dear; repent. (*She weeps, straining to his bosom.*) O Willie, my darling boy, repent and join us.

SCENE VI

To these, LAWSON, LESLIE, JEAN

LAWSON. She kens a', thank the guid Lord!

BRODIE (*to* MARY). I know you forgive me now; I ask no more. That is a good man. (*To* LESLIE.) Will you take her from my hands? (LESLIE *takes* MARY.) Jean, are ye here to see the end?

JEAN. Eh man, can ye no fly? Could ye no say that it was me?

BRODIE. No, Jean, this is where it ends. Uncle, this is where it ends. And to think that not an hour ago I still had hopes! Hopes! Ay, not an hour ago I thought of a new life. You were not forgotten, Jean. Leslie, you must try to forgive me . . . you, too!

LESLIE. You are her brother.

BRODIE (*to* LAWSON). And you?

LAWSON. My name-child and my sister's bairn!

BRODIE. You won't forget Jean, will you? nor the child?

LAWSON. That I will not.

MARY. O Willie, nor I.

SCENE VII

To these, HUNT

HUNT. The game's up, Deacon. I'll trouble you to come along with me.

BRODIE (*behind the table*). One moment, officer: I have a word to say before witnesses ere I go. In all this there is but one man guilty; and that man is I. None else has sinned; none else must suffer. This poor woman (*pointing to* JEAN) I have used; she never understood. Mr. Procurator-Fiscal, that is my dying confession. (*He snatches his hanger from the table, and rushes upon* HUNT, *who parries, and runs him through. He reels across the stage and falls.*) The new life . . . the new life! (*He dies.*)

CURTAIN.

BEAU AUSTIN

Dedicated

WITH ADMIRATION AND RESPECT

TO

GEORGE MEREDITH

Bournemouth,
1st October, 1884

PERSONS REPRESENTED

George Frederick Austin, called 'Beau Austin,'	*Ætat.*	50
John Fenwick, of Allonby Shaw,	"	26
Anthony Musgrave, Cornet in the Prince's Own,	"	21
Menteith, the Beau's Valet,	"	55
A Royal Duke. (Dumb Show.)		
Dorothy Musgrave, Anthony's Sister,	"	25
Miss Evelina Foster, her Aunt,	"	45
Barbara Ridley, her Maid,	"	20

Visitors to the Wells.

The Time is 1820. The Scene is laid at Tunbridge Wells.
The Action occupies a space of ten hours.

HAYMARKET THEATRE

Monday, November 3d, 1890

CAST

George Frederick Austin,	Mr. Tree.
John Fenwick,	Mr. Fred. Terry.
Anthony Musgrave,	Mr. Edmund Maurice.
Menteith,	Mr. Brookfield.
A Royal Duke,	Mr. Robb Harwood.
Dorothy Musgrave,	Mrs. Tree.
Miss Evelina Foster,	Miss Rose Leclercq.
Barbara Ridley,	Miss Aylward.

Visitors to the Wells.

PROLOGUE

Spoken by MR. TREE *in the character of Beau Austin*

"To all and singular," as Dryden says,
We bring a fancy of those Georgian days,
Whose style still breathed a faint and fine perfume
Of old-world courtliness and old-world bloom:
When speech was elegant and talk was fit,
For slang had not been canonised as wit;
When manners reigned, when breeding had the wall,
And Women — yes! — were ladies first of all;
When Grace was conscious of its gracefulness,
And man — though Man! — was not ashamed to dress.
A brave formality, a measured ease,
Were his — and her's — whose effort was to please.
And to excel in pleasing was to reign
And, if you sighed, never to sigh in vain.

But then, as now — it may be, something more —
Woman and man were human to the core.
The hearts that throbbed behind that quaint attire
Burned with a plenitude of essential fire.
They too could risk, they also could rebel.
They could love wisely — they could love too well.

In that great duel of Sex, that ancient strife
Which is the very central fact of life,
They could — and did — engage it breath for breath,
They could — and did — get wounded unto death.
As at all times since time for us began
Woman was truly woman, man was man,
And joy and sorrow were as much at home
In trifling Tunbridge as in mighty Rome.

Dead — dead and done with! Swift from shine to shade
The roaring generations flit and fade.
To this one, fading, flitting, like the rest,
We come to proffer — be it worst or best —
A sketch, a shadow, of one brave old time;
A hint of what it might have held sublime;
A dream, an idyll, call it what you will,
Of man still Man, and woman — Woman still!

MUSICAL INDUCTION: *"Lascia ch'io pianga"* (*Rinaldo*). HANDEL.

ACT I

The Stage represents Miss Foster's apartments at the Wells. Doors, L. and C.; a window, L. C., looking on the street; a table, R., laid for breakfast.

SCENE I

BARBARA; *to her* MISS FOSTER

BARBARA (*out of window*). Mr. Menteith! Mr. Menteith! Mr. Menteith!—Drat his old head! Will nothing make him hear?—Mr. Menteith!

MISS FOSTER (*entering*). Barbara! this is incredible: after all my lessons, to be leaning from the window, and calling (for unless my ears deceived me, you were positively calling!) into the street.

BARBARA. Well, madam, just wait until you hear who it was. I declare it was much more for Miss Dorothy and yourself than for me; and if it was a little countrified, I had a good excuse.

MISS FOSTER. Nonsense, child! At least, who was it?

BARBARA. Miss Evelina, I was sure you would ask. Well, what do you think? I was looking out of window at the barber's opposite ——

MISS FOSTER. Of which I entirely disapprove ——

BARBARA. And first there came out two of the most beautiful —— the Royal livery, madam!

MISS FOSTER. Of course, of course: the Duke of York arrived last night. I trust you did not hail the Duke's footman?

BARBARA. O no, madam, it was after they were gone. Then, who should come out — but you'll never guess!

MISS FOSTER. I shall certainly not try.

BARBARA. Mr. Menteith himself!

MISS FOSTER. Why, child, I never heard of him.

BARBARA. O madam, not the Beau's own gentleman?

MISS FOSTER. Mr. Austin's servant. No? Is it possible? By that, George Austin must be here.

BARBARA. No doubt of that, madam; they're never far apart. He came out feeling his chin, madam, so; and a packet of letters under his arm, so; and he had the Beau's own walk to that degree you couldn't tell his back from his master's.

MISS FOSTER. My dear Barbara, you too frequently forget yourself. A young woman in your position must beware of levity.

BARBARA. Madam, I know it; but la, what are you to make of me? Look at the time and trouble dear Miss Dorothy was always taking — she that trained up everybody — and see what's come of it: Barbara Ridley I was, and Barbara Ridley I am; and I don't do with fashionable ways — I can't do with them; and indeed, Miss Evelina, I do sometimes wish we were all back again on Edenside, and Mr. Anthony a boy again, and dear Miss Dorothy her old self, galloping the bay mare along the moor, and taking care of all of us as if she was our mother, bless her heart!

MISS FOSTER. Miss Dorothy herself, child? Well, now you mention it, Tunbridge of late has scarcely seemed to suit her constitution. She falls away, has not a word to throw at a dog, and is ridiculously pale. Well, now Mr. Austin has returned, after six months of infidelity to the dear Wells, we shall all, I hope, be brightened up. Has the mail come?

BARBARA. That it has, madam, and the sight of Mr. Menteith put it clean out of my head. (*With letters.*) Four for you, Miss Evelina, two for me, and only one for Miss Dorothy. Miss Dorothy seems quite neglected, does she not? Six months ago, it was a different story.

MISS FOSTER. Well, and that's true, Barbara, and I had not remarked it. I must take her seriously to task. No young lady in her position should neglect her correspondence. (*Opening a letter.*) Here's from that dear ridiculous boy, the Cornet, announcing his arrival for to-day.

BARBARA. O madam, will he come in his red coat?

MISS FOSTER. I could not conceive him missing such a chance. Youth, child, is always vain, and Mr. Anthony is unusually young.

BARBARA. La, madam, he can't help that.

MISS FOSTER. My child, I am not so sure. Mr. Anthony is a great concern to me. He was orphaned, to be sure, at ten years old; and ever since he has been only as it were his sister's son. Dorothy did everything for him: more indeed than I thought quite ladylike, but I suppose I begin to be old-fashioned. See how she worked and slaved — yes, slaved! — for him: teaching him herself, with what pains and pa-

tience she only could reveal, and learning that she might be able; and see what he is now: a gentleman, of course, but, to be frank, a very commonplace one: not what I had hoped of Dorothy's brother; not what I had dreamed of the heir of two families — Musgrave and Foster, child! Well, he may now meet Mr. Austin. He requires a Mr. Austin to embellish and correct his manners. (*Opening another letter.*) Why, Barbara, Mr. John Scrope and Miss Kate Dacre are to be married!

BARBARA. La, madam, how nice!

MISS FOSTER. They are: As I'm a sinful woman. And when will you be married, Barbara? and when dear Dorothy? I hate to see old maids a-making.

BARBARA. La, Miss Evelina, there's no harm in an old maid.

MISS FOSTER. You speak like a fool, child: sour grapes are all very well but it's a woman's business to be married. As for Dorothy, she is five-and-twenty, and she breaks my heart. Such a match, too! Ten thousand to her fortune, the best blood in the north, a most advantageous person, all the graces, the finest sensibility, excellent judgment, the Foster walk; and all these to go positively a-begging! The men seem stricken with blindness. Why, child, when I came out (and I was the dear girl's image!) I had more swains at my feet in a fortnight than our Dorothy in —— O, I cannot fathom it: it must be the girl's own fault.

BARBARA. Why, madam, I did think it was a case with Mr. Austin.

MISS FOSTER. With Mr. Austin? why, how very rustic! The attentions of a gentleman like Mr. Austin,

child, are not supposed to lead to matrimony. He is a feature of society: an ornament: a personage: a private gentleman by birth, but a kind of king by habit and reputation. What woman could he marry? Those to whom he might properly aspire are all too far below him. I have known George Austin too long, child, and I understand that the very greatness of his success condemns him to remain unmarried.

BARBARA. Sure, madam, that must be tiresome for him.

MISS FOSTER. Some day, child, you will know better than to think so. George Austin, as I conceive him, and as he is regarded by the world, is one of the triumphs of the other sex. I walked my first minuet with him: I wouldn't tell you the year, child, for worlds; but it was soon after his famous rencounter with Colonel Villiers. He had killed his man, he wore pink and silver, was most elegantly pale, and the most ravishing creature!

BARBARA. Well, madam, I believe that: he is the most beautiful gentleman still.

SCENE II

To these, DOROTHY, *L*

DOROTHY (*entering*). Good-morning, aunt! Is there anything for me? (*She goes eagerly to table, and looks at letters.*)

MISS FOSTER. Good-morrow, niece. Breakfast, Barbara.

DOROTHY (*with letter unopened*). Nothing.

MISS FOSTER. And what do you call that, my dear? (*Sitting.*) Is John Fenwick nobody?

DOROTHY (*looking at letter.*) From John? O yes, so it is. (*Lays down letter unopened, and sits to breakfast,* BARBARA *waiting.*)

MISS FOSTER (*to* BARBARA, *with plate*). Thanks, child; now you may give me some tea. Dolly, I must insist on your eating a good breakfast: I cannot away with your pale cheeks and that Patience-on-a-Monument kind of look. (Toast, Barbara.) At Edenside you ate and drank and looked like Hebe. What have you done with your appetite?

DOROTHY. I don't know, aunt, I'm sure.

MISS FOSTER. Then consider, please, and recover it as soon as you can: to a young lady in your position a good appetite is an attraction — almost a virtue. Do you know that your brother arrives this morning?

DOROTHY. Dear Anthony! Where is his letter, Aunt Evelina? I am pleased that he should leave London and its perils, if only for a day.

MISS FOSTER. My dear, there are moments when you positively amaze me. (Barbara, some *pâté*, if you please!) I beg you not to be a prude. All women, of course, are virtuous; but a prude is something I regard with abhorrence. The Cornet is seeing life, which is exactly what he wanted. You brought him up surprisingly well; I have always admired you for it; but let us admit — as women of the world, my dear — it was no upbringing for a man. You and that fine solemn fellow, John Fenwick, led a life that was positively no better than the Middle Ages; and between the two of you, poor Anthony (who, I am sure, was a most

passive creature!) was so packed with principle and admonition that I vow and declare he reminded me of Issachar stooping between his two burdens. It was high time for him to be done with your apron-string, my dear: he has all his wild oats to sow; and that is an occupation which it is unwise to defer too long. By the bye, have you heard the news? The Duke of York has done us a service for which I was unprepared. (More tea, Barbara!) George Austin, bringing the prince in his train, is with us once more.

DOROTHY. I knew he was coming.

MISS FOSTER. You knew, child? and did not tell? You are a public criminal.

DOROTHY. I did not think it mattered, Aunt Evelina.

MISS FOSTER. O do not make-believe. I am in love with him myself, and have been any time since Nelson and the Nile. As for you, Dolly, since he went away six months ago, you have been positively in the megrims. I shall date your loss of appetite from George Austin's vanishing. No, my dear, our family require entertainment: we must have wit about us, and beauty, and the *bel air*.

BARBARA. Well, Miss Dorothy, perhaps it's out of my place: but I do hope Mr. Austin will come: I should love to have him see my necklace on.

DOROTHY. Necklace? what necklace? Did he give you a necklace?

BARBARA. Yes, indeed, Miss, that he did: the very same day he drove you in his curricle to Penshurst. You remember, Miss, I couldn't go.

DOROTHY. I remember.

MISS FOSTER. And so do I. I had a touch of . . .

Foster in the blood: the family gout, dears! . . . And you, you ungrateful nymph, had him a whole day to yourself, and not a word to tell me when you returned.

DOROTHY. I remember. (*Rising.*) Is that the necklace, Barbara? It does not suit you. Give it me.

BARBARA. La, Miss Dorothy, I wouldn't for the world.

DOROTHY. Come, give it me. I want it. Thank you: you shall have my birthday pearls instead.

MISS FOSTER. Why, Dolly, I believe you're jealous of the maid. Foster, Foster: always a Foster trick to wear the willow in anger.

DOROTHY. I do not think, madam, that I am of a jealous habit.

MISS FOSTER. O, the personage is your excuse! And I can tell you, child, that when George Austin was playing Florizel to the Duchess's Perdita, all the maids in England fell a prey to green-eyed melancholy. It was the *ton*, you see: not to pine for that Sylvander was to resign from good society.

DOROTHY. Aunt Evelina, stop; I cannot endure to hear you. What is he after all but just Beau Austin? What has he done — with half a century of good health, what has he done that is either memorable or worthy? Diced and danced and set fashions; vanquished in a drawing-room, fought for a word; what else? As if these were the meaning of life! Do not make me think so poorly of all of us women. Sure, we can rise to admire a better kind of man than Mr. Austin. We are not all to be snared with the eye, dear aunt; and those that are — O! I know not whether I more hate or pity them.

MISS FOSTER. You will give me leave, my niece:

such talk is neither becoming in a young lady nor creditable to your understanding. The world was made a great while before Miss Dorothy Musgrave; and you will do much better to ripen your opinions, and in the meantime read your letter, which I perceive you have not opened. (DOROTHY *opens and reads letter.*) Barbara, child, you should not listen at table.

BARBARA. Sure, madam, I hope I know my place.

MISS FOSTER. Then do not do it again.

DOROTHY. Poor John Fenwick! he coming here!

MISS FOSTER. Well, and why not? Dorothy, my darling child, you give me pain. You never had but one chance, let me tell you pointedly: and that was John Fenwick. If I were you, I would not let my vanity so blind me. This is not the way to marry.

DOROTHY. Dear aunt, I shall never marry.

MISS FOSTER. A fiddlestick's end! every one must marry. (*Rising.*) Are you for the Pantiles?

DOROTHY. Not to-day, dear.

MISS FOSTER. Well, well! have your wish, Dolorosa. Barbara, attend and dress me.

SCENE III

DOROTHY

DOROTHY. How she tortures me, poor aunt, my poor blind aunt; and I — I could break her heart with a word. That she should see nothing, know nothing — there's where it kills. O, it is more than I can bear . . . and yet, how much less than I deserve! Mad girl, of what do I complain? that this dear innocent woman still believes me good, still pierces me to the

soul with trustfulness. Alas, and were it otherwise, were her dear eyes opened to the truth, what were left me but death? — He, too — she must still be praising him, and every word is a lash upon my conscience. If I could die of my secret: if I could cease — but one moment cease — this living lie; if I could sleep and forget and be at rest! — Poor John! (*Reading the letter*) he at least is guiltless; and yet for my fault he too must suffer, he too must bear part in my shame. Poor John Fenwick! Has he come back with the old story: with what might have been, perhaps, had we stayed by Edenside? Eden? yes, my Eden, from which I fell. O my old north country, my old river — the river of my innocence, the old country of my hopes — how could I endure to look on you now? And how to meet John? — John, with the old love on his lips, the old, honest, innocent, faithful heart! There was a Dorothy once who was not unfit to ride with him, her heart as light as his, her life as clear as the bright rivers we forded; he called her his Diana, he crowned her so with rowan. Where is that Dorothy now? that Diana? she that was everything to John? For O, I did him good; I know I did him good; I will still believe I did him good: I made him honest and kind and a true man; alas, and could not guide myself! And now, how will he despise me! For he shall know; if I die, he shall know all; I could not live, and not be true with him. (*She takes out the necklace and looks at it.*) That he should have bought me from my maid! George, George, that you should have stooped to this! Basely as you have used me, this is the basest. Perish the witness! (*She treads the trinket under foot.*) Break,

break like my heart, break like my hopes, perish like my good name!

SCENE IV

To her, FENWICK, *C.*

FENWICK (*after a pause*). Is this how you receive me, Dorothy? Am I not welcome?—Shall I go then?

DOROTHY (*running to him, with hands outstretched*). O no, John, not for me. (*Turning, and pointing to the necklace.*) But you find me changed.

FENWICK (*with a movement towards the necklace*). This?

DOROTHY. No, no, let it lie. That is a trinket—broken. But the old Dorothy is dead.

FENWICK. Dead, dear? Not to me.

DOROTHY. Dead to you—dead to all men.

FENWICK. Dorothy, I loved you as a boy. There is not a meadow on Edenside but is dear to me for your sake, not a cottage but recalls your goodness, not a rock nor a tree but brings back something of the best and brightest youth man ever had. You were my teacher and my queen; I walked with you, I talked with you, I rode with you; I lived in your shadow; I saw with your eyes. You will never know, dear Dorothy, what you were to the dull boy you bore with; you will never know with what romance you filled my life, with what devotion, with what tenderness and honour. At night I lay awake and worshipped you; in my dreams I saw you, and you loved me; and you remember, when we told each other stories—you have not forgotten, dearest—that Princess Hawthorn that

was still the heroine of mine: who was she? I was not bold enough to tell, but she was you! You, my virgin huntress, my Diana, my queen.

DOROTHY. O silence, silence — pity!

FENWICK. No, dear; neither for your sake nor mine will I be silenced. I have begun; I must go on and finish, and put fortune to the touch. It was from you I learned honour, duty, piety, and love. I am as you made me, and I exist but to reverence and serve you. Why else have I come here, the length of England, my heart burning higher every mile, my very horse a clog to me? why, but to ask you for my wife? Dorothy, you will not deny me.

DOROTHY. You have not asked me about this broken trinket?

FENWICK. Why should I ask? I love you.

DOROTHY. Yet I must tell you. Sit down. (*She picks up the necklace, and stands looking at it. Then, breaking down.*) O John, John, it's long since I left home.

FENWICK. Too long, dear love. The very trees will welcome you.

DOROTHY. Ay, John, but I no longer love you. The old Dorothy is dead, God pardon her!

FENWICK. Dorothy, who is the man?

DOROTHY. O poor Dorothy! O poor dead Dorothy! John, you found me breaking this: me, your Diana of the Fells, the Diana of your old romance by Edenside. Diana — O what a name for me! Do you see this trinket? It is a chapter in my life. A chapter, do I say? my whole life, for there is none to follow. John, you must bear with me, you must help me. I have that to tell — there is a secret — I have a secret, John — O, for God's

sake, understand. That Diana you revered — O John, John, you must never speak of love to me again.

FENWICK. What do you say? How dare you?

DOROTHY. John, it is the truth. Your Diana, even she, she whom you so believed in, she who so believed in herself, came out into the world only to be broken. I met, here at the Wells, a man — why should I tell you his name? I met him, and I loved him. My heart was all his own; yet he was not content with that: he must intrigue to catch me, he must bribe my maid with this. (*Throws the necklace on the table.*) Did he love me? Well, John, he said he did; and be it so! He loved, he betrayed, and he has left me.

FENWICK. Betrayed?

DOROTHY. Ay, even so; I was betrayed. The fault was mine that I forgot our innocent youth, and your honest love.

FENWICK. Dorothy, O Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Yours is the pain; but, O John, think it is for your good. Think in England how many true maids may be waiting for your love, how many that can bring you a whole heart, and be a noble mother to your children, while your poor Diana, at the first touch, has proved all frailty. Go, go and be happy, and let me be patient. I have sinned.

FENWICK. By God, I'll have his blood.

DOROTHY. Stop! I love him. (*Between* FENWICK *and door, C.*)

FENWICK. What do I care? I loved you too. Little he thought of that, little either of you thought of that. His blood — I'll have his blood!

DOROTHY. You shall never know his name.

FENWICK. Know it? Do you think I cannot guess? Do you think I had not heard he followed you? Do you think I had not suffered — O suffered! George Austin is the man. Dear shall he pay it!

DOROTHY (*at his feet*). Pity me; spare me, spare your Dorothy! I love him — love him — love him!

FENWICK. Dorothy, you have robbed me of my happiness, and now you would rob me of my revenge.

DOROTHY. I know it; and shall I ask, and you not grant?

FENWICK (*raising her*). No, Dorothy, you shall ask nothing, nothing in vain from me. You ask his life; I give it you, as I would give you my soul; as I would give you my life, if I had any left. My life is done; you have taken it. Not a hope, not an end; not even revenge. (*He sits.*) Dorothy, you see your work.

DOROTHY. O God, forgive me.

FENWICK. Ay, Dorothy, He will, as I do.

DOROTHY. As you do? Do you forgive me, John?

FENWICK. Ay, more than that, poor soul. I said my life was done, I was wrong; I have still a duty. It is not in vain you taught me; I shall still prove to you that it was not in vain. You shall soon find that I am no backward friend. Farewell.

MUSICAL INDUCTION: *"The Lass of Richmond Hill."*

ACT II

The Stage represents George Austin's dressing-room. Elaborate toilet-table, R., with chair; a cheval glass so arranged as to correspond with glass on table. Breakfast-table, L., front. Door, L. The Beau is discovered at table, in dressing-gown, trifling with correspondence. MENTEITH *is frothing chocolate.*

SCENE I

AUSTIN, MENTEITH

MENTEITH. At the barber's, Mr. George, I had the pleasure of meeting two of the Dook's gentlemen.

AUSTIN. Well, and was his Royal Highness satisfied with his quarters?

MENTEITH. Quite so, Mr. George. Delighted, I believe.

AUSTIN. I am rejoiced to hear it. I wish I could say I was as pleased with my journey, Menteith. This is the first time I ever came to the Wells in another person's carriage; Duke or not, it shall be the last, Menteith.

MENTEITH. Ah, Mr. George, no wonder. And how many times have we made that journey back and forth?

AUSTIN. Enough to make us older than we look.

MENTEITH. To be sure, Mr. George, you do wear well.

AUSTIN. *We* wear well, Menteith.

MENTEITH. I hear, Mr. George, that Miss Musgrave is of the company.

AUSTIN. Is she so? Well, well! well, well!

MENTEITH. I've not seen the young lady myself, Mr. George; but the barber tells me she's looking poorly.

AUSTIN. Poorly?

MENTEITH. Yes, Mr. George, poorly was his word.

AUSTIN. Well, Menteith, I am truly sorry. She is not the first.

MENTEITH. Yes, Mr. George. (*A bell.* MENTEITH *goes out, and re-enters with card.*)

AUSTIN (*with card*). Whom have we here? Anthony Musgrave?

MENTEITH. A fine young man, Mr. George; and with a look of the young lady, but not so gentlemanly.

AUSTIN. You have an eye, you have an eye. Let him in.

SCENE II

AUSTIN, MENTEITH, ANTHONY

AUSTIN. I am charmed to have this opportunity, Mr. Musgrave. You belong to my old corps, I think? And how does my good friend, Sir Frederick? I had his line; but like all my old comrades, he thinks last about himself, and gives me not of his news.

ANTHONY. I protest, sir, this is a very proud moment. Your name is still remembered in the regiment. (AUSTIN *bows.*) The Colonel — he keeps his health, sir, con-

sidering his age (AUSTIN *bows again, and looks at* MENTEITH) — tells us young men you were a devil of a fellow in your time.

AUSTIN. I believe I was — in my time. Menteith, give Mr. Musgrave a dish of chocolate. So, sir, we see you at the Wells.

ANTHONY. I have but just alighted. I had but one thought, sir: to pay my respects to Mr. Austin. I have not yet kissed my aunt and sister.

AUSTIN. In my time — to which you refer — the ladies had come first.

ANTHONY. The women? I take you, sir. But then you see, a man's relatives don't count. And besides, Mr. Austin, between men of the world, I am fairly running away from the sex: I am positively in flight. Little Hortense of the Opera; you know; she sent her love to you. She's mad about me, I think. You never saw a creature so fond.

AUSTIN. Well, well, child! you are better here. In my time — to which you have referred — I knew the lady. Does she wear well?

ANTHONY. I beg your pardon, sir!

AUSTIN. No offence, child, no offence. She was a very lively creature. But you neglect your chocolate, I see?

ANTHONY. We don't patronise it, Mr. Austin; we haven't for some years: the service has quite changed since your time. You'd be surprised.

AUSTIN. Doubtless. I am.

ANTHONY. I assure you, sir, I and Jack Bosbury of the Fifty-Second ——

AUSTIN. The Hampshire Bosburys? ——

ANTHONY. I do not know exactly, sir. I believe he is related.

AUSTIN. Or perhaps — I remember a Mr. Bosbury, a cutter of coats. I have the vanity to believe I formed his business.

ANTHONY. I — I hope not, sir. But as I was saying, I and this Jack Bosbury, and the Brummagem Bantam — a very pretty light-weight, sir — drank seven bottles of Burgundy to the three of us inside the eighty minutes. Jack, sir, was a little cut; but me and the Bantam went out and finished the evening on hot gin. Life, sir, life! Tom Cribb was with us. He spoke of you, too, Tom did: said you'd given him a wrinkle for his second fight with the black man. No, sir, I assure you, you're not forgotten.

AUSTIN (*bows*). I am pleased to learn it. In my time, I had an esteem for Mr. Cribb.

ANTHONY. O come, sir! but your time cannot be said to be over.

AUSTIN. Menteith, you hear?

MENTEITH. Yes, Mr. George.

ANTHONY. The Colonel told me that you liked to shake an elbow. Your big main, sir, with Lord Wensleydale, is often talked about. I hope I may have the occasion to sit down with you. I shall count it an honour, I assure you.

AUSTIN. But would your aunt, my very good friend, approve?

ANTHONY. Why, sir, you do not suppose I am in leading-strings?

AUSTIN. You forget, child: a family must hang together. When I was young — in my time — I was

alone; and what I did concerned myself. But a youth who has — as I think you have — a family of ladies to protect, must watch his honour, child, and preserve his fortune. . . . You have no commands from Sir Frederick?

ANTHONY. None, sir, none.

AUSTIN. Shall I find you this noon upon the Pantiles? . . . I shall be charmed. Commend me to your aunt and your fair sister. Menteith?

MENTEITH. Yes, Mr. George. (*Shows Anthony out.*)

SCENE III

AUSTIN, MENTEITH, *returning*

AUSTIN. Was I ever like that, Menteith?

MENTEITH. No, Mr. George, you was always a gentleman.

AUSTIN. Youth, my good fellow, youth.

MENTEITH. Quite so, Mr. George.

AUSTIN. Well, Menteith, we cannot make nor mend. We cannot play the jockey with Time. Age is the test: of wine, Menteith, and men.

MENTEITH. Me and you and the old Hermitage, Mr. George, he-he!

AUSTIN. And the best of these, the Hermitage. But come: we lose our day. Help me off with this. (MENTEITH *takes off* AUSTIN'S *dressing-gown;* AUSTIN *passes R. to dressing-table, and takes up first cravat.*)

AUSTIN. Will the hair do, Menteith?

MENTEITH. Never saw it lay better, Mr. George. (AUSTIN *proceeds to wind first cravat. A bell: exit*

MENTEITH. AUSTIN *drops first cravat in basket and takes second.*)

AUSTIN (*winding and singing*)—

"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

(*Second cravat a failure. Re-enter* MENTEITH *with card.*) Fenwick? of Allonby Shaw? A good family, Menteith, but I don't know the gentleman. (*Lays down card, and takes up third cravat.*) Send him away with every consideration.

MENTEITH. To be sure, Mr. George. (*He goes out. Third cravat a success. Re-enter* MENTEITH.) He says, Mr. George, that he has an errand from Miss Musgrave.

AUSTIN (*with waistcoat*). Show him in, Menteith, at once. (*Singing and fitting waistcoat at glass*)—

"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

SCENE IV

AUSTIN, *R.* *To him* MENTEITH *and* FENWICK

MENTEITH (*announcing*). Mr. Fenwick, Mr. George.

AUSTIN. At the name of Miss Musgrave, my doors fly always open.

FENWICK. I believe, sir, you are acquainted with my cousin, Richard Gaunt?

AUSTIN. The county member? An old and good friend. But you need not go so far afield: I know your good house of Allonby Shaw since the days of the

Black Knight. We are, in fact, and at a very royal distance, cousins.

FENWICK. I desired, sir, from the nature of my business, that you should recognise me for a gentleman.

AUSTIN. The preliminary, sir, is somewhat grave.

FENWICK. My business is both grave and delicate.

AUSTIN. Menteith, my good fellow. (*Exit* MENTEITH.) Mr. Fenwick, honour me so far as to be seated. (*They sit.*) I await your pleasure.

FENWICK. Briefly, sir, I am come, not without hope, to appeal to your good heart.

AUSTIN. From Miss Musgrave?

FENWICK. No, sir, I abused her name, and am here upon my own authority. Upon me the consequence.

AUSTIN. Proceed.

FENWICK. Mr. Austin, Dorothy Musgrave is the oldest and dearest of my friends, is the lady whom for ten years it has been my hope to make my wife. She has shown me reason to discard that hope for another: that I may call her Mrs. Austin.

AUSTIN. In the best interests of the lady (*rising*) I question if you have been well inspired. You are aware, sir, that from such interference there is but one issue: to whom shall I address my friend?

FENWICK. Mr. Austin, I am here to throw myself upon your mercy. Strange as my errand is, it will seem yet more strange to you that I came prepared to accept at your hands any extremity of dishonour and not fight. The lady whom it is my boast to serve has honoured me with her commands. These are my law, and by these your life is sacred.

AUSTIN. Then, sir (*with his hand upon the bell*), this

conversation becomes impossible. You have me at too gross a disadvantage; and, as you are a gentleman and respect another, I would suggest that you retire.

FENWICK. Sir, you speak of disadvantage; think of mine. All my life long, with all the forces of my nature, I have loved this lady. I came here to implore her to be my wife, to be my queen; my saint she had been always! She was too noble to deceive me. She told me what you know. I will not conceal that my first mood was of anger: I would have killed you like a dog. But, Mr. Austin — bear with me awhile — I, on the threshold of my life, who have made no figure in the world, nor ever shall now, who had but one treasure, and have lost it — if I, abandoning revenge, trampling upon jealousy, can supplicate you to complete my misfortune — O Mr. Austin! you who have lived, you whose gallantry is beyond the insolence of a suspicion, you who are a man crowned and acclaimed, who are loved, and loved by such a woman — you who excel me in every point of advantage, will you suffer me to surpass you in generosity?

AUSTIN. You speak from the heart. (*Sits.*) What do you want with me?

FENWICK. Marry her.

AUSTIN. Mr. Fenwick, I am the older man. I have seen much of life, much of society, much of love. When I was young, it was expected of a gentleman to be ready with his hat to a lady, ready with his sword to a man; to honour his word and his king; to be courteous with his equals, generous to his dependants, helpful and trusty in friendship. But it was not asked of us to be quixotic. If I had married every lady by whom it

is my fortune — not my merit — to have been distinguished, the Wells would scarce be spacious enough for my establishment. You see, sir, that while I respect your emotion, I am myself conducted by experience. And besides, Mr. Fenwick, is not love a warfare? has it not rules? have not our fair antagonists their tactics, their weapons, their place of arms? and is there not a touch of — pardon me the word! of silliness in one who, having fought, and having vanquished, sounds a parley, and capitulates to his own prisoner? Had the lady chosen, had the fortune of war been other, 'tis like she had been Mrs. Austin. Now! . . . You know the world.

FENWICK. I know, sir, that the world contains much cowardice. To find Mr. Austin afraid to do the right, this surprises me.

AUSTIN. Afraid, child?

FENWICK. Yes, sir, afraid. You know her, you know if she be worthy; and you answer me with — the world: the world which has been at your feet: the world which Mr. Austin knows so well how to value and is so able to rule.

AUSTIN. I have lived long enough, Mr. Fenwick, to recognise that the world is a great power. It can make; but it can break.

FENWICK. Sir, suffer me: you spoke but now of friendship, and spoke warmly. Have you forgotten Colonel Villiers?

AUSTIN. Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Fenwick, you forget what I have suffered.

FENWICK. O sir, I know you loved him. And yet, for a random word you quarrelled; friendship was

weighed in vain against the world's code of honour; you fought, and your friend fell. I have heard from others how he lay long in agony, and how you watched and nursed him, and it was in your embrace he died. In God's name have you forgotten that? Was not this sacrifice enough? or must the world, once again, step between Mr. Austin and his generous heart?

AUSTIN. Good God, sir, I believe you are in the right; I believe, upon my soul I believe, there is something in what you say.

FENWICK. Something, Mr. Austin? O credit me, the whole difference betwixt good and evil.

AUSTIN. Nay, nay, but there you go too far. There are many kinds of good: honour is a diamond cut in a thousand facets, and with the true fire in each. Thus, and with all our differences, Mr. Fenwick, you and I can still respect, we can still admire each other.

FENWICK. Bear with me still, sir, if I ask you what is the end of life but to excel in generosity? To pity the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to right where we have wronged, to be brave in reparation — these noble elements you have; for of what besides is the fabric of your dealing with Colonel Villiers? That is man's chivalry to man. Yet to a suffering woman — a woman feeble, betrayed, unconsoled — you deny your clemency, you refuse your aid, you proffer injustice for atonement. Nay, you are so disloyal to yourself that you can choose to be ungenerous and unkind. Where, sir, is the honour? What facet of the diamond is that?

AUSTIN. You forget, sir, you forget. But go on.

FENWICK. O sir, not I — not I but yourself forgets: George Austin forgets George Austin. A woman loved

by him, betrayed by him, abandoned by him — that woman suffers; and a point of honour keeps him from his place at her feet. She has played and lost, and the world is with him if he deign to exact the stakes. Is that the Mr. Austin whom Miss Musgrave honoured with her trust? Then, sir, how miserably was she deceived!

AUSTIN. Child — child ——

FENWICK. Mr. Austin, still bear with me, still follow me. O sir, will you not picture that dear lady's life? Her years how few, her error thus irreparable, what henceforth can be her portion but remorse, the consciousness of self-abasement, the shame of knowing that her trust was ill-bestowed? To think of it: this was a queen among women; and this — this is George Austin's work! Sir, let me touch your heart: let me prevail with you to feel that 'tis impossible.

AUSTIN. I am a gentleman. What do you ask of me?

FENWICK. To be the man she loved: to be clement where the world would have you triumph, to be of equal generosity with the vanquished, to be worthy of her sacrifice and of yourself.

AUSTIN. Mr. Fenwick, your reproof is harsh ——

FENWICK (*interrupting him*). O sir, be just, be just! ——

AUSTIN. But it is merited, and I thank you for its utterance. You tell me that the true victory comes when the fight is won: that our foe is never so noble nor so dangerous as when she is fallen, that the crowning triumph is that we celebrate over our conquering selves. Sir, you are right. Kindness, ay kindness after all. And with age, to become clement. Yes,

ambition first; then, the rounded vanity — victory still novel; and last, as you say, the royal mood of the mature man: to abdicate for others. . . . Sir, you touched me hard about my dead friend; still harder about my living duty; and I am not so young but I can take a lesson. There is my hand upon it: she shall be my wife.

FENWICK. Ah, Mr. Austin, I was sure of it.

AUSTIN. Then, sir, you were vastly mistaken. There is nothing of Beau Austin here. I have simply, my dear child, sate at the feet of Mr. Fenwick.

FENWICK. Ah, sir, your heart was counsellor enough.

AUSTIN. Pardon me. I am vain enough to be the judge: there are but two people in the world who could have wrought this change: yourself and that dear lady. (*Touches bell.*) Suffer me to dismiss you. One instant of toilet, and I follow. Will you do me the honour to go before, and announce my approach? (*Enter* MENTEITH.)

FENWICK. Sir, if my admiration ——

AUSTIN. Dear child, the admiration is the other way. (*Embraces him.* MENTEITH *shows him out.*)

SCENE V

AUSTIN

AUSTIN. Upon my word, I think the world is getting better. We were none of us young men like that — in my time, to quote my future brother. (*He sits down before the mirror.*) Well, here ends Beau Austin. Paris, Rome, Vienna, London — victor everywhere: and now he must leave his bones in Tunbridge Wells.

(*Looks at his leg.*) Poor Dolly Musgrave! a good girl after all, and will make me a good wife; none better. The last — of how many? — ay, and the best! Walks like Hebe. But still, here ends Beau Austin. Perhaps it's time. Poor Dolly — was she looking poorly? She shall have her wish. Well, we grow older, but we grow no worse.

SCENE VI

AUSTIN, MENTEITH

AUSTIN. Menteith, I am going to be married.

MENTEITH. Well, Mr. George, but I am pleased to hear it. Miss Musgrave is a most elegant lady.

AUSTIN. Ay, Mr. Menteith? and who told you the lady's name?

MENTEITH. Mr. George, you was always a gentleman.

AUSTIN. You mean I wasn't always? Old boy, you are in the right. This shall be a good change for both you and me. We have lived too long like a brace of truants: now is the time to draw about the fire. How much is left of the old Hermitage?

MENTEITH. Hard upon thirty dozen, Mr. George, and not a bad cork in the bin.

AUSTIN. And a mistress, Menteith, that's worthy of that wine.

MENTEITH. Mr. George, sir, she's worthy of you.

AUSTIN. Gad, I believe it. (*Shakes hands with him.*)

MENTEITH (*breaking down*). Mr. George, you've been a damned good master to me, and I've been a damned good servant to you; we've been proud of each other

from the first; but if you'll excuse my plainness, Mr. George, I never liked you better than to-day.

AUSTIN. Cheer up, old boy, the best is yet to come. Get out the tongs, and curl me like a bridegroom. (*Sits before dressing-glass;* MENTEITH *produces curling irons and plies them.* AUSTIN *sings*) —

"I'd crowns resign
To call her mine,
Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill!"

DROP

MUSICAL INDUCTION : the "Minuet" from *"Don Giovanni."*

ACT III

The stage represents Miss Foster's lodging as in Act I.

SCENE I

DOROTHY, *R., at tambour;* ANTHONY, *C, bestriding chair;* MISS FOSTER, *L. C.*

ANTHONY. Yes, ma'am, I like my regiment: we are all gentlemen, from old Fred downwards, and all of a good family. Indeed, so are all my friends, except one tailor sort of fellow, Bosbury. But I'm done with him. I assure you, Aunt Evelina, we are Corinthian to the last degree. I wouldn't shock you ladies for the world ——

MISS FOSTER. Don't mind me, my dear; go on.

ANTHONY. Really, ma'am, you must pardon me: I trust I understand what topics are to be avoided among females — And before my sister, too! A girl of her age!

DOROTHY. Why, you dear, silly fellow, I'm old enough to be your mother.

ANTHONY. My dear Dolly, you do not understand; you are not a man of the world. But, as I was going on to say, there is no more spicy regiment in the service.

MISS FOSTER. I am not surprised that it maintains its old reputation. You know, my dear (*to* DOROTHY), it was George Austin's regiment.

DOROTHY. Was it, aunt?

ANTHONY. Beau Austin? Yes, it was; and a precious dust they make about him still — a parcel of old frumps! That's why I went to see him. But he's quite extinct: he couldn't be Corinthian if he tried.

MISS FOSTER. I am afraid that even at your age George Austin held a very different position from the distinguished Anthony Musgrave.

ANTHONY. Come, ma'am, I take that unkindly. Of course I know what you're at: of course the old pūt cut no end of a dash with the Duchess.

MISS FOSTER. My dear child, I was thinking of no such thing; *that* was immoral.

ANTHONY. Then you mean that affair at Brighton: when he cut the Prince about Perdita Robinson.

MISS FOSTER. No, I had forgotten it.

ANTHONY. O, well, I know — that duel! But look here, Aunt Evelina, I don't think you'd be much gratified after all if I were to be broke for killing my commanding officer about a quarrel at cards.

DOROTHY. Nobody asks you, Anthony, to imitate Mr. Austin. I trust you will set yourself a better model. But you may choose a worse. With all his faults, and all his enemies, Mr. Austin is a pattern gentleman: You would not ask a man to be braver, and there are few so generous. I cannot bear to hear him called in fault by one so young. Better judges, dear, are better pleased.

ANTHONY. Hey-dey! what's this?

MISS FOSTER. Why, Dolly, this is April and May. You surprise me.

DOROTHY. I am afraid, indeed, madam, that you have much to suffer from my caprice. (*She goes out, L.*)

SCENE II

ANTHONY, MISS FOSTER

ANTHONY. What is the meaning of all this, ma'am? I don't like it.

MISS FOSTER. Nothing, child, that I know. You spoke of Mr. Austin, our dear friend, like a groom; and she, like any lady of taste, took arms in his defence.

ANTHONY. No, ma'am, that won't do. I know the sex. You mark my words, the girl has some confounded nonsense in her head, and wants looking after.

MISS FOSTER. In my presence, Anthony, I shall ask you to speak of Dorothy with greater respect. With your permission, your sister and I will continue to direct our own affairs. When we require the interference of so young and confident a champion, you shall know. (*Curtsies, kisses her hand, and goes out, L.*)

SCENE III

ANTHONY

ANTHONY. Upon my word, I think Aunt Evelina one of the most uncivil old women in the world. Nine weeks ago I came of age; and they still treat me like a boy. I'm a recognised Corinthian, too: take my liquor with old Fred, and go round with the Brummagem Bantam and Jack Bosb—— . . . O damn Jack Bosbury.

If his father was a tailor, he shall fight me for his ungentlemanly conduct. However, that's all one. What I want is to make Aunt Evelina understand that I'm not the man to be put down by an old maid who's been brought up in a work-basket, begad! I've had nothing but rebuffs all day. I'ts very remarkable. There was that man Austin, to begin with. I'll be hanged if I can stand him. I hear too much of him; and if I can only get a good excuse to put him to the door, I believe it would give Dorothy and all of us a kind of a position. After all, he's not a man to visit in the house of ladies: not when I'm away, at least. Nothing in it of course; but is he a man whose visits I can sanction?

SCENE IV

ANTHONY, BARBARA

BARBARA. Please, Mr. Anthony, Miss Foster said I was to show your room.

ANTHONY. Ha! Baby? Now, you come here. You're a girl of sense, I know.

BARBARA. La, Mr. Anthony, I hope I'm nothing of the kind.

ANTHONY. Come, come! that's not the tone I want: I'm serious. Does this man Austin come much about the house?

BARBARA. O Mr. Anthony, for shame! Why don't you ask Miss Foster?

ANTHONY. Now I wish you to understand: I'm the head of this family. It's my business to look after my sister's reputation, and my aunt's too, begad! That's

what I'm here for: I'm their natural protector. And what I want you, Barbara Ridley, to understand — you whose fathers have served my fathers — is just simply this: if you've any common gratitude, you're bound to help me in the work. Now Barbara, you know me, and you know my Aunt Evelina. She's a good enough woman; I'm the first to say so. But who is she to take care of a young girl? She's ignorant of the world to that degree she believes in Beau Austin! Now you and I, Bab, who are not so high and dry, see through and through him; we know that a man like that is not fit company for any inexperienced girl.

BARBARA. O Mr. Anthony, don't say that. (*Weeping.*)

ANTHONY. Hullo! what's wrong?

BARBARA. Nothing that I know of. O Mr. Anthony, I don't think there can be anything.

ANTHONY. Think? Don't think? What's this?

BARBARA. O sir! I don't know, and yet I don't like it. Here's my beautiful necklace all broke to bits: she took it off my very neck, and gave me her birthday pearls instead; and I found it afterwards on the table, all smashed to pieces; and all she wanted it for was to take and break it. Why that? It frightens me, Mr. Anthony, it frightens me.

ANTHONY (*with necklace*). This? What has this trumpery to do with us?

BARBARA. He gave it me: that's why she broke it.

ANTHONY. He? who?

BARBARA. Mr. Austin did; and I do believe I should not have taken it, Mr. Anthony, but I thought no harm, upon my word of honour. He was always here: that was six months ago; and indeed, indeed, I thought

they were to marry. How would I think else with a born lady like Miss Dorothy?

ANTHONY. Why, Barbara, God help us all, what's this? You don't mean to say that there was ——

BARBARA. Here it is, as true as true: they were going for a jaunt; and Miss Foster had her gout; and I was to go with them; and he told me to make-believe I was ill; and I did; and I stayed at home; and he gave me that necklace; and they went away together; and, oh dear! I wish I'd never been born.

ANTHONY. Together? he and Dolly? Good Lord! my sister! And since then?

BARBARA. We haven't seen him from that day to this, the wicked villain; and, Mr. Anthony, he hasn't so much as written the poor dear a word.

ANTHONY. Bab, Bab, Bab, this is a devil of a bad business; this is a cruel bad business, Baby; cruel upon me, cruel upon all of us; a family like mine. I'm a young man, Barbara, to have this delicate affair to manage; but, thank God, I'm Musgrave to the bone. He bribed a servant-maid, did he? I keep his bribe; it's mine now; dear bought, by George! He shall have it in his teeth. Shot Colonel Villiers, did he? we'll see how he faces Anthony Musgrave. You're a good girl, Barbara; so far you've served the family. You leave this to me. And, hark ye, dry your eyes and hold your tongue: I'll have no scandal raised by you.

BARBARA. I do hope, sir, you won't use me against Miss Dorothy.

ANTHONY. That's my affair: your business is to hold your tongue. Miss Dorothy has made her bed and must lie on it. Here's Jack Fenwick. You can go.

SCENE V

ANTHONY, FENWICK

ANTHONY. Jack Fenwick, is that you? Come here, my boy. Jack, you've given me many a thrashing, and I deserved 'em; and I'll not see you made a fool of now. George Austin is a damned villain, and Dorothy Musgrave is no girl for you to marry: God help me that I should have to say it.

FENWICK. Good God, who told *you?*

ANTHONY. Ay, Jack; it's hard on me, Jack. But you'll stand my friend in spite of this, and you'll take my message to the man won't you? For it's got to come to blood, Jack: there's no way out of that. And perhaps your poor friend will fall, Jack; think of that: like Villiers. And all for an unworthy sister.

FENWICK. Now, Anthony Musgrave, I give you fair warning; see you take it: one word more against your sister, and we quarrel.

ANTHONY. You let it slip yourself, Jack: you know yourself she's not a virtuous girl.

FENWICK. What do you know of virtue, whose whole boast is to be vicious? How dare you draw conclusions? Dolt and puppy! you can no more comprehend that angel's excellencies than she can stoop to believe in your vices. And you talk morality? Anthony, I'm a man who has been somewhat roughly tried: take care.

ANTHONY. You don't seem able to grasp the situation, Jack. It's very remarkable; I'm the girl's natural protector; and you should buckle-to and help, like a friend of the family. And instead of that, begad! you turn on me like all the rest.

FENWICK. Now mark me fairly: Mr. Austin follows at my heels; he comes to offer marriage to your sister —that is all you know, and all you shall know; and if by any misplaced insolence of yours this marriage should miscarry, you have to answer, not to Mr. Austin only, but to me.

ANTHONY. It's all a most discreditable business, and I don't see how you propose to better it by cutting my throat. Of course if he's going to marry her, it's a different thing; but I don't believe he is, or he'd have asked me. You think me a fool? Well, see they marry, or they'll find me a dangerous fool.

SCENE VI

To these, AUSTIN, BARBARA *announcing*

BARBARA. Mr. Austin. (*She shows* AUSTIN *in, and retires.*)

AUSTIN. You will do me the justice to acknowledge, Mr. Fenwick, that I have been not long delayed by my devotion to the Graces.

ANTHONY. So, sir, I find you in my house——

AUSTIN. And charmed to meet you again. It went against my conscience to separate so soon. Youth, Mr. Musgrave, is to us older men a perpetual refreshment.

ANTHONY. You came here, sir, I suppose, upon some errand?

AUSTIN. My errand, Mr. Musgrave, is to your fair sister. Beauty, as you know, comes before valour.

ANTHONY. In my own house, and about my own sister, I presume I have the right to ask for something more explicit.

AUSTIN. The right, my dear sir, is beyond question; but it is one, as you were going on to observe, on which no gentleman insists.

FENWICK. Anthony, my good fellow, I think we had better go.

ANTHONY. I have asked a question.

AUSTIN. Which I was charmed to answer, but which, on repetition, might begin to grow distasteful.

ANTHONY. In my own house——

FENWICK. For God's sake, Anthony!

AUSTIN. In your aunt's house, young gentleman, I shall be careful to refrain from criticism. I am come upon a visit to a lady: that visit I shall pay; when you desire (if it be possible that you desire it) to resume this singular conversation, select some fitter place. Mr. Fenwick, this afternoon, may I present you to his Royal Highness?

ANTHONY. Why, sir, I believe you must have misconceived me. I have no wish to offend: at least at present.

AUSTIN. Enough, sir. I was persuaded I had heard amiss. I trust we shall be friends.

FENWICK. Come, Anthony, come: here is your sister.

(*As* FENWICK *and* ANTHONY *go out, C., enter* DOROTHY, *L.*)

SCENE VII

AUSTIN, DOROTHY

DOROTHY. I am told, Mr. Austin, that you wish to see me.

AUSTIN. Madam, can you doubt of that desire? can you question my sincerity?

DOROTHY. Sir, between you and me these compliments are worse than idle: they are unkind. Sure, we are alone!

AUSTIN. I find you in an hour of cruelty, I fear. Yet you have condescended to receive this poor offender; and having done so much, you will not refuse to give him audience.

DOROTHY. You shall have no cause, sir, to complain of me. I listen.

AUSTIN. My fair friend, I have sent myself — a poor ambassador — to plead for your forgiveness. I have been too long absent; too long, I would fain hope, madam, for you; too long for my honour and my love. I am no longer, madam, in my first youth; but I may say that I am not unknown. My fortune, originally small, has not suffered from my husbandry. I have excellent health, an excellent temper, and the purest ardour of affection for your person. I found not on my merits, but on your indulgence. Miss Musgrave, will you honour me with your hand in marriage?

DOROTHY. Mr. Austin, if I thought basely of marriage, I should perhaps accept your offer. There was a time, indeed, when it would have made me proudest among women. I was the more deceived, and have to thank you for a salutary lesson. You chose to count me as a cipher in your rolls of conquest; for six months you left me to my fate; and you come here to-day — prompted, I doubt not, by an honourable impulse — to offer this tardy reparation. No: it is too late.

AUSTIN. Do you refuse?

DOROTHY. Yours is the blame: we are no longer equal. You have robbed me of the right to marry any

one but you; and do you think me, then, so poor in spirit as to accept a husband on compulsion?

AUSTIN. Dorothy, you loved me once.

DOROTHY. Ay, you will never guess how much: you will never live to understand how ignominious a defeat that conquest was. I loved and trusted you: I judged you by myself; think, then, of my humiliation, when, at the touch of trial, all your qualities proved false, and I beheld you the slave of the meanest vanity — selfish, untrue, base! Think, sir, what a humbling of my pride to have been thus deceived: to have taken for my idol such a commonplace imposture as yourself; to have loved — yes, loved — such a shadow, such a mockery of man. And now I am unworthy to be the wife of any gentleman; and you — look me in the face, George — are you worthy to be my husband?

AUSTIN. No, Dorothy, I am not. I was a vain fool; I blundered away the most precious opportunity; and my regret will be lifelong. Do me the justice to accept this full confession of my fault. I am here to-day to own and to repair it.

DOROTHY. Repair it? Sir, you condescend too far.

AUSTIN. I perceive with shame how grievously I had misjudged you. But now, Dorothy, believe me, my eyes are opened. I plead with you, not as my equal, but as one in all ways better than myself. I admire you, not in that trivial sense in which we men are wont to speak of women, but as God's work: as a wise mind, a noble soul, and a most generous heart, from whose society I have all to gain, all to learn. Dorothy, in one word, I love you.

DOROTHY. And what, sir, has wrought this trans-

formation? You knew me of old, or thought you knew me? Is it in six months of selfish absence that your mind has changed? When did that change begin? A week ago? Sure, you would have written! To-day? Sir, if this offer be anything more than fresh offence, I have a right to be enlightened.

AUSTIN. Madam, I foresaw this question. So be it: I respect, and I will not deceive you. But give me, first of all, a moment for defence. There are few men of my habits and position who would have done as I have done: sate at the feet of a young boy, accepted his lessons, gone upon his errand: fewer still, who would thus, at the crisis of a love, risk the whole fortune of the soul — love, gratitude, even respect. Yet more than that! For conceive how I respect you, if I, whose lifelong trade has been flattery, stand before you and make the plain confession of a truth that must not only lower me, but deeply wound yourself.

DOROTHY. What means ——?

AUSTIN. Young Fenwick, my rival for your heart, he it was that sent me.

DOROTHY. He? O disgrace! He sent you! That was what he meant? Am I fallen so low? Am I your common talk among men? Did you dice for me? Did he kneel? O John, John, how could you! And you, Mr. Austin, whither have you brought me down? shame heaping upon shame — to what end! oh, to what end?

AUSTIN. Madam, you wound me: you look wilfully amiss. Sure, any lady in the land might well be proud to be loved as you are loved, with such nobility as Mr. Fenwick's, with such humility as mine. I came, in-

deed, in pity, in good-nature, what you will. (See, dearest lady, with what honesty I speak: if I win you, it shall be with the unblemished truth.) All that is gone. Pity? it is myself I pity. I offer you not love — I am not worthy. I ask, I beseech of you: suffer me to wait upon you like a servant, to serve you with my rank, my name, the whole devotion of my life. I am a gentleman — ay, in spite of my fault — an upright gentleman; and I swear to you that you shall order your life and mine at your free will. Dorothy, at your feet, in remorse, in respect, in love — O such love as I have never felt, such love as I derided — I implore, I conjure you to be mine!

DOROTHY. Too late! too late.

AUSTIN. No, no, not too late: not too late for penitence, not too late for love.

DOROTHY. Which do you propose? that I should abuse your compassion, or reward your treachery? George Austin, I have been your mistress, and I will never be your wife.

AUSTIN. Child, dear child, I have not told you all: there is worse still: your brother knows; the boy as good as told me. Dorothy, this is scandal at the door — O let that move you: for that, if not for my sake, for that, if not for love, trust me, trust me again.

DOROTHY. I am so much the more your victim: that is all, and shall that change my heart? The sin must have its wages. This, too, was done long ago: when you stooped to lie to me. The shame is still mine, the fault still yours.

AUSTIN. Child, child, you kill me: you will not understand. Can you not see? the lad will force me to a duel.

DOROTHY. And you will kill him? Shame after shame, threat upon threat. Marry me, or you are dishonoured; marry me, or your brother dies: and this is man's honour! But my honour and my pride are different. I will encounter all misfortune sooner than degrade myself by an unfaithful marriage. How should I kneel before the altar, and vow to reverence as my husband you, you who deceived me as my lover?

AUSTIN. Dorothy, you misjudge me cruelly; I have deserved it. You will not take me for your husband; why should I wonder? You are right. I have indeed filled your life with calamity: the wages, ay, the wages, of my sin are heavy upon you. But I have one more thing to ask of your pity; and O remember, child, who it is that asks it: a man guilty in your sight, void of excuse, but old, and very proud, and most unused to supplication. Dorothy Musgrave, will you forgive George Austin?

DOROTHY. O, George!

AUSTIN. It is the old name: that is all I ask, and more than I deserve. I shall remember, often remember, how and where it was bestowed upon me for the last time. I thank you, Dorothy, from my heart; a heart, child, that has been too long silent, but is not too old, I thank God! not yet too old to learn a lesson and to accept a reproof. I will not keep you longer: I will go—I am so bankrupt in credit that I dare not ask you to believe in how much sorrow. But, Dorothy, my acts will speak for me with more persuasion. If it be in my power, you shall suffer no more through me: I will avoid your brother; I will leave this place, I will leave

England, to-morrow; you shall be no longer tortured with the neighbourhood of your ungenerous lover. Dorothy, farewell!

SCENE VIII

DOROTHY; *to whom*, ANTHONY, *L.*

DOROTHY (*on her knees, and reaching with her hands.*) George, George! (*Enter* ANTHONY.)

ANTHONY. Ha! what are you crying for?

DOROTHY. Nothing, dear! (*Rising.*)

ANTHONY. Is Austin going to marry you?

DOROTHY. I shall never marry.

ANTHONY. I thought as much. You should have come to me.

DOROTHY. I know, dear, I know; but there was nothing to come about.

ANTHONY. It's a lie. You have disgraced the family. You went to John Fenwick: see what he has made of it! But I will have you righted: it shall be atoned in the man's blood.

DOROTHY. Anthony! And if I had refused him?

ANTHONY. You? refuse George Austin? You never had the chance.

DOROTHY. I have refused him.

ANTHONY. Dorothy, you lie. You would shield your lover; but this concerns not you only: it strikes my honour and my father's honour.

DOROTHY. I have refused him — refused him, I tell you — refused him. The blame is mine; are you so mad and wicked that you will not see?

ANTHONY. I see this: that man must die.

DOROTHY. He? never! You forget, you forget whom you defy; you run upon your death.

ANTHONY. Ah, my girl, you should have thought of that before. It is too late now.

DOROTHY. Anthony, if I beg you — Anthony, I have tried to be a good sister; I brought you up, dear, nursed you when you were sick, fought for you, hoped for you, loved you — think of it, think of the dear past, think of our home and the happy winter nights, the castles in the fire, the long shining future, the love that was to forgive and suffer always — O you will spare, you will spare me this.

ANTHONY. I will tell you what I will do, Dolly: I will do just what you taught me — my duty: that, and nothing else.

DOROTHY. O Anthony, you also, you to strike me! Heavens, shall I kill them — I — I, that love them, kill them! Miserable, sinful girl! George, George, thank God, you will be far away! O go, George, go at once!

ANTHONY. He goes, the coward! Ay, is this more of your contrivance? Madam, you make me blush. But to-day at least I know where I can find him. This afternoon, on the Pantiles, he must dance attendance on the Duke of York. Already he must be there; and there he is at my mercy.

DOROTHY. Thank God, you are deceived: he will not fight. He promised me that; thank God I have his promise for that.

ANTHONY. Promise! Do you see this? (*producing necklace*) the thing he bribed your maid with? I shall dash it in his teeth before the Duke and before all Tunbridge. Promise, you poor fool? what promise holds

against a blow? Get to your knees and pray for him; for, by the God above, if he has any blood in his body, one of us shall die before to-night. (*He goes out.*)

DOROTHY. Anthony, Anthony! . . . O my God. George will kill him.

Music: "Chè farò," as the drop falls.

DROP.

MUSICAL INDUCTION: "Gavotte;" "*Iphigénie en Aulide.*" GLUCK

ACT IV

The Stage represents the Pantiles: the alleys fronting the spectators in parallel lines. At the back, a stand of musicians, from which the "Gavotte" is repeated on muted strings. The music continues nearly through Scene I. Visitors walking to and fro beneath the limes. A seat in front, L.

SCENE I

MISS FOSTER, BARBARA, MENTEITH; *Visitors*

MISS FOSTER (*entering; escorted by* MENTEITH, *and followed by* BARBARA). And so, Menteith, here you are once more. And vastly pleased I am to see you, my good fellow, not only for your own sake, but because you harbinger the Beau. (*Sits, L.;* MENTEITH *standing over her.*)

MENTEITH. Honoured madam, I have had the pleasure to serve Mr. George for more than thirty years. This is a privilege—a very great privilege. I have beheld him in the first societies, moving among the first rank of personages; and none, madam, none outshone him.

BARBARA. I assure you, madam, when Mr. Menteith took me to the play, he talked so much of Mr. Austin that I couldn't hear a word of Mr. Kean.

MISS FOSTER. Well, well, and very right. That was the old school of service, Barbara, which you would do well to imitate. This is a child, Menteith, that I am trying to form.

MENTEITH. Quite so, madam.

MISS FOSTER. And are we soon to see our princely guest, Menteith?

MENTEITH. His Royal Highness, madam? I believe I may say quite so. Mr. George will receive our gallant prince upon the Pantiles (*looking at his watch*) in, I should say, a matter of twelve minutes from now. Such, madam, is Mr. George's order of the day.

BARBARA. I beg your pardon, madam, I am sure, but are we really to see one of His Majesty's own brothers? That will be pure! O madam, this is better than Carlisle.

MISS FOSTER. The wood-note wild: a loyal Cumbrian, Menteith.

MENTEITH. Eh? Quite so, madam.

MISS FOSTER. When she has seen as much of the Royal Family as you, my good fellow, she will find it vastly less entertaining.

MENTEITH. Yes, madam, indeed; in these distinguished circles, life is but a slavery. None of the best set would relish Tunbridge without Mr. George; Tunbridge and Mr. George (if you'll excuse my plainness, madam) are in a manner of speaking identified; and indeed it was the Dook's desire alone that brought us here.

BARBARA. What? the Duke? O dear! was it for that?

MENTEITH. Though, to be sure, madam, Mr. George would always be charmed to find himself (*bowing*) among so many admired members of his own set.

MISS FOSTER. Upon my word, Menteith, Mr. Austin is as fortunate in his servant as his reputation.

MENTEITH. Quite so, madam. But let me observe that the opportunities I have had of acquiring a knowledge of Mr. George's character have been positively unrivalled. Nobody knows Mr. George like his old attendant. The goodness of that gentleman — but, madam, you will soon be equally fortunate, if, as I understand, it is to be a match.

MISS FOSTER. I hope, Menteith, you are not taking leave of your senses. Is it possible you mean my niece?

MENTEITH. Madam, I have the honour to congratulate you. I put a second curl in Mr. George's hair on purpose.

SCENE II

To these, AUSTIN. MENTEITH *falls back, and* AUSTIN *takes his place in front of* MISS FOSTER, *his attitude a counterpart of* MENTEITH'S.

AUSTIN. Madam, I hasten to present my homage.

MISS FOSTER. A truce to compliments! Menteith, your charming fellow there, has set me positively crazy. Dear George Austin, is it true? can it be true?

AUSTIN. Madam, if he has been praising your niece he has been well inspired. If he was speaking, as I spoke an hour ago myself, I wish, Miss Foster, that he had held his tongue. I have indeed offered myself to Miss Dorothy, and she, with the most excellent reason, has refused me.

MISS FOSTER. Is it possible? why, my dear George

Austin, . . . then I suppose it is John Fenwick after all!

AUSTIN. Not one of us is worthy.

MISS FOSTER. This is the most amazing circumstance. You take my breath away. My niece refuse George Austin? why, I give you my word, I thought she had adored you. A perfect scandal: it positively must not get abroad.

AUSTIN. Madam, for that young lady I have a singular regard. Judge me as tenderly as you can, and set it down, if you must, to an old man's vanity — for, Evelina, we are no longer in the heyday of our youth — judge me as you will: I should prefer to have it known.

MISS FOSTER. Can you? George Austin, you? My youth was nothing; I was a failure; but for you? no, George, you never can, you never must be old. You are the triumph of my generation, George, and of our old friendship too. Think of my first dance and my first partner. And to have this story — no, I could not bear to have it told of you.

AUSTIN. Madam, there are some ladies over whom it is a boast to have prevailed; there are others whom it is a glory to have loved. And I am so vain, dear Evelina, that even thus I am proud to link my name with that of Dorothy Musgrave.

MISS FOSTER. George, you are changed. I would not know you.

AUSTIN. I scarce know myself. But pardon me, dear friend (*taking out his watch*), in less than four minutes our illustrious guest will descend amongst us; and I observe Mr. Fenwick, with whom I have a pressing business. Suffer me, dear Evelina! ——

SCENE III

To these, FENWICK. MISS FOSTER *remains seated, L.* AUSTIN *goes R. to* FENWICK, *whom he salutes with great respect.*

AUSTIN. Mr. Fenwick, I have played and lost. That noble lady, justly incensed at my misconduct, has condemned me. Under the burden of such a loss, may I console myself with the esteem of Mr. Fenwick?

FENWICK. She refused you? Pardon me, sir, but was the fault not yours?

AUSTIN. Perhaps to my shame, I am no novice, Mr. Fenwick; but I have never felt nor striven as to-day. I went upon your errand; but, you may trust me, sir, before I had done I found it was my own. Until to-day I never rightly valued her; sure, she is fit to be a queen. I have a remorse here at my heart to which I am a stranger. Oh! that was a brave life, that was a great heart that I have ruined.

FENWICK. Ay, sir, indeed.

AUSTIN. But, sir, it is not to lament the irretrievable that I intrude myself upon your leisure. There is something to be done, to save, at least to spare, that lady. You did not fail to observe the brother?

FENWICK. No, sir, he knows all; and being both intemperate and ignorant ——

AUSTIN. Surely. I know. I have to ask you then to find what friends you can among this company; and if you have none, to make them. Let everybody hear the news. Tell it (if I may offer the suggestion) with humour: how Mr. Austin, somewhat upon the

wane, but still filled with sufficiency, gloriously presumed and was most ingloriously set down by a young lady from the north: the lady's name a secret, which you will permit to be divined. The laugh — the position of the hero — will make it circulate; — you perceive I am in earnest; — and in this way I believe our young friend will find himself forestalled.

FENWICK. Mr. Austin, I would not have dared to ask so much of you; I will go further: were the positions changed, I should fear to follow your example.

AUSTIN. Child, child, you could not afford it.

SCENE IV

To these, the ROYAL DUKE, *C.; then, immediately,* ANTHONY, *L.* FENWICK *crosses to* MISS FOSTER, *R.* AUSTIN *accosts the* DUKE, *C., in dumb show; the muted strings take up a new air, Mozart's "Anglaise"; couples passing under the limes, and forming a group behind* AUSTIN *and the* DUKE. ANTHONY *in front, L., watches* AUSTIN, *who, as he turns from the* DUKE, *sees him, and comes forward with extended hand.*

AUSTIN. Dear child, let me present you to his Royal Highness.

ANTHONY (*with necklace*). Mr. Austin, do you recognise the bribe you gave my sister's maid?

AUSTIN. Hush, sir, hush! you forget the presence of the Duke.

ANTHONY. Mr. Austin, you are a coward and a scoundrel.

AUSTIN. My child, you will regret these words: I refuse your quarrel.

ANTHONY. You do? Take that. (*He strikes* AUSTIN *on the mouth. At the moment of the blow* ——)

SCENE V

To these, DOROTHY, *L. U. E.* DOROTHY, *unseen by* AUSTIN, *shrieks. Sensation. Music stops. Tableau.*

AUSTIN (*recovering his composure*). Your Royal Highness, suffer me to excuse the disrespect of this young gentleman. He has so much apology, and I have, I hope, so good a credit, as incline me to accept this blow. But I must beg of your Highness, and, gentlemen, all of you here present, to bear with me while I will explain what is too capable of misconstruction. I am the rejected suitor of this young gentleman's sister; of Miss Dorothy Musgrave: a lady whom I singularly honour and esteem; a word from whom (if I could hope that word) would fill my life with happiness. I was not worthy of that lady; when I was defeated in fair field, I presumed to make advances through her maid. See in how laughable a manner fate repaid me! The waiting-girl derided, the mistress denied, and now comes in this very ardent champion who publicly insults me. My vanity is cured; you will judge it right, I am persuaded, all of you, that I should accept my proper punishment in silence; you, my Lord Duke, to pardon this young gentleman; and you, Mr. Musgrave, to spare me further provocation, which I am determined to ignore.

DOROTHY (*rushing forward, falling at* AUSTIN'S *knees, and seizing his hand*). George, George, it was for me. My hero! take me! What you will!

AUSTIN (*in an agony*). My dear creature, remember that we are in public. (*Raising her.*) Your Royal Highness, may I present you Mrs. George Frederick Austin? (*The Curtain falls on a few bars of the "Lass of Richmond Hill."*)

ADMIRAL GUINEA

Dedicated

WITH AFFECTION AND ESTEEM

TO

ANDREW LANG

BY THE SURVIVORS OF THE

WALRUS

SAVANNAH,
This 27th day of September, 1884.

PERSONS REPRESENTED

JOHN GAUNT, called 'ADMIRAL GUINEA,' once captain of the Slaver *Arethusa*.

ARETHUSA GAUNT, his Daughter.

DAVID PEW, a Blind Beggar, once Boatswain of the *Arethusa*.

KIT FRENCH, a Privateersman.

MRS. DRAKE, Landlady of the *Admiral Benbow* Inn.

The Scene is laid in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple. The Time is about the year 1760. The action occupies part of a day and night.

NOTE.—Passages suggested for omission in representation are enclosed in square brackets, thus [ ].

ACT I

The Stage represents a room in Admiral Guinea's house: fireplace, arm-chair, and table with Bible, L., towards the front; door C., with window on each side, the window on the R., practicable; doors, R. and L., back; corner cupboard, a brass-strapped sea-chest fixed to the wall and floor, R.; cutlasses, telescopes, sextant, quadrant, a calendar, and several maps upon the wall; a ship clock; three wooden chairs; a dresser against wall, R. C.; on the chimney-piece the model of a brig and several shells. The centre bare of furniture. Through the windows and the door, which is open, green trees and a small field of sea.

SCENE I

ARETHUSA *is discovered, dusting*

ARETHUSA. Ten months and a week to-day! Now for a new mark. Since the last, the sun has set and risen over the fields and the pleasant trees at home, and on Kit's lone ship and the empty sea. Perhaps it blew; perhaps rained; (*at the chart*) perhaps he was far up here to the nor'ard, where the icebergs sail; perhaps at anchor among these wild islands of the snakes and buccaneers. O, you big chart, if I could see him sailing on you! North and South Atlantic; such a weary sight of water and no land; never an island for the poor lad to land upon. But still, God's there. (*She takes down the telescope to dust it.*) Father's spy-glass again; and

my poor Kit perhaps with such another, sweeping the great deep!

SCENE II

ARETHUSA; *to her,* KIT, *C.* [*He enters on tiptoe, and she does not see or hear him*]

ARETHUSA (*dusting telescope*). At sea they have less dust at least: that's so much comfort.

KIT. Sweetheart, ahoy!

ARETHUSA. Kit!

KIT. Arethusa.

ARETHUSA. My Kit! Home again—O my love!—home again to me!

KIT. As straight as wind and tide could carry me!

ARETHUSA. O Kit, my dearest. O Kit—O! O!

KIT. Hey? Steady, lass: steady, I say. For goodness' sake, ease it off.

ARETHUSA. I will, Kit—I will. But you came so sudden.

KIT. I thought ten months of it about preparation enough.

ARETHUSA. Ten months and a week: you haven't counted the days as I have. Another day gone, and one day nearer to Kit: that has been my almanac. How brown you are! how handsome!

KIT. A pity you can't see yourself! Well, no, I'll never be handsome: brown I may be, never handsome. But I'm better than that, if the proverb's true; for I'm ten hundred thousand fathoms deep in love. I bring you a faithful sailor. What! you don't think much of that for a curiosity? Well, that's so: you're right; the rarity is in the girl that's worth it ten times over. Faith-

ful? I couldn't help it if I tried! No, sweetheart, and I fear nothing: I don't know what fear is, but just of losing you. (*Starting.*) Lord, that's not the Admiral?

ARETHUSA. Aha, Mr. Dreadnought! you see you fear my father.

KIT. That I do. But, thank goodness, it's nobody. Kiss me: no, I won't kiss you: kiss *me*. I'll give you a present for that. See!

ARETHUSA. A wedding-ring!

KIT. My mother's. Will you take it?

ARETHUSA. Yes, will I — and give myself for it.

KIT. Ah, if we could only count upon your father! He's a man every inch of him; but he can't endure Kit French.

ARETHUSA. He hasn't learned to know you, Kit, as I have, nor yet do you know him. He seems hard and violent; at heart he is only a man overwhelmed with sorrow. Why else, when he looks at me and does not know that I observe him, should his face change, and fill with such tenderness, that I could weep to see him? Why, when he walks in his sleep, as he does almost every night, his eyes open and beholding nothing, why should he cry so pitifully on my mother's name? Ah, if you could hear him then, you would say yourself: here is a man that has loved; here is a man that will be kind to lovers.

KIT. Is that so? Ay, it's a hard thing to lose your wife; ay, that must cut the heart indeed. But for all that, my lass, your father is keen for the doubloons.

ARETHUSA. Right, Kit: and small blame to him. There is only one way to be honest, and the name of that is thrift.

KIT. Well, and that's my motto. I've left the ship; no more letter of marque for me. Good-bye to Kit French, privateersman's mate; and how-d'ye-do to Christopher, the coasting skipper. I've seen the very boat for me: I've enough to buy her, too; and to furnish a good house, and keep a shot in the locker for bad luck. So far, there's nothing to gainsay. So far it's hopeful enough; but still there's Admiral Guinea, you know — and the plain truth is that I'm afraid of him.

ARETHUSA. Admiral Guinea? Now Kit, if you are to be true lover of mine, you shall not use that name. His name is Captain Gaunt. As for fearing him, Kit French, you're not the man for me, if you fear anything but sin. He's a stern man because he's in the right.

KIT. He is a man of God; I am what he calls a child of perdition. I was a privateersman — serving my country, I say; but he calls it pirate. He is thrifty and sober; he has a treasure, they say, and it lies so near his heart that he tumbles up in his sleep to stand watch over it. What has a harum-scarum dog like me to expect from a man like him? He won't see I'm starving for a chance to mend; "Mend," he'll say; "I'll be shot if you mend at the expense of my daughter;" and the worst of it is, you see, he'll be right.

ARETHUSA. Kit, if you dare to say that faint-hearted word again, I'll take my ring off. What are we here for but to grow better or grow worse? Do you think Arethusa French will be the same as Arethusa Gaunt?

KIT. I don't want her better.

ARETHUSA. Ah, but she shall be!

KIT. Hark, here he is! By George, it's neck or nothing now. Stand by to back me up.

SCENE III

To these, GAUNT, *C.*

KIT (*with* ARETHUSA'S *hand*). Captain Gaunt, I have come to ask you for your daughter.

GAUNT. Hum. (*He sits in his chair, L.*)

KIT. I love her, and she loves me, sir. I've left the privateering. I've enough to set me up and buy a tidy sloop—Jack Lee's; you know the boat, Captain; clinker built, not four years old, eighty tons burthen, steers like a child. I've put my mother's ring on Arethusa's finger; and if you'll give us your blessing, I'll engage to turn over a new leaf, and make her a good husband.

GAUNT. In whose strength, Christopher French?

KIT. In the strength of my good, honest love for her: as you did for her mother, and my father for mine. And you know, Captain, a man can't command the wind; but (excuse me, sir) he can always lie the best course possible, and that's what I'll do, so God help me.

GAUNT. Arethusa, you at least are the child of many prayers; your eyes have been unsealed; and to you the world stands naked, a morning watch for duration, a thing spun of cobwebs for solidity. In the presence of an angry God, I ask you: have you heard this man?

ARETHUSA. Father, I know Kit, and I love him.

GAUNT. I say it solemnly, this is no Christian union. To you, Christopher French, I will speak nothing of eternal truths: I will speak to you the language of this world. You have been trained among sinners who

gloried in their sin: in your whole life you never saved one farthing; and now, when your pockets are full, you think you can begin, poor dupe, in your own strength. You are a roysterer, a jovial companion; you mean no harm — you are nobody's enemy but your own. No doubt you tell this girl of mine, and no doubt you tell yourself, that you can change. Christopher, speaking under correction, I defy you! You ask me for this child of many supplications, for this brand plucked from the burning: I look at you; I read you through and through; and I tell you — no! (*Striking table with his fist.*)

KIT. Captain Gaunt, if you mean that I am not worthy of her, I'm the first to say so. But, if you'll excuse me, sir, I'm a young man, and young men are no better'n they ought to be; it's known; they're all like that; and what's their chance? To be married to a girl like this! And would you refuse it to me? Why, sir, you yourself, when you came courting, you were young and rough; and yet I'll make bold to say that Mrs. Gaunt was a happy woman, and the saving of yourself into the bargain. Well, now, Captain Gaunt, will you deny another man, and that man a sailor, the very salvation that you had yourself?

GAUNT. Salvation, Christopher French, is from above.

KIT. Well, sir, that is so; but there's means, too; and what means so strong as the wife a man has to strive and toil for, and that bears the punishment whenever he goes wrong? Now, sir, I've spoke with your old shipmates in the Guinea trade. Hard as nails, they said, and true as the compass: as rough as a slaver, but as just as a judge. Well, sir, you hear me plead: I ask you for my chance; don't you deny it to me.

GAUNT. You speak of me? In the true balances we both weigh nothing. But two things I know: the depth of iniquity, how foul it is; and the agony with which a man repents. Not until seven devils were cast out of me did I awake; each rent me as it passed. Ay, that was repentance. Christopher, Christopher, you have sailed before the wind since first you weighed your anchor, and now you think to sail upon a bowline? You do not know your ship, young man: you will go to le'ward like a sheet of paper; I tell you so that know — I tell you so that have tried, and failed, and wrestled in the sweat of prayer, and at last, at last, have tasted grace. But, meanwhile, no flesh and blood of mine shall lie at the mercy of such a wretch as I was then, or as you are this day. I could not own the deed before the face of heaven if I sanctioned this unequal yoke. Arethusa, pluck off that ring from off your finger. Christopher French, take it, and go hence.

KIT. Arethusa, what do you say?

ARETHUSA. O Kit, you know my heart. But he is alone, and I am his only comfort; and I owe all to him; and shall I not obey my father? But, Kit, if you will let me, I will keep your ring. Go, Kit; go, and prove to my father that he was mistaken; go and win me. And O, Kit, if ever you should weary, come to me — no, do not come! but send a word — and I shall know all, and you shall have your ring. (GAUNT *opens his Bible and begins to read.*)

KIT. Don't say that, don't say such things to me; I sink or swim with you. (*To* GAUNT.) Old man, you've struck me hard; give me a good word to go with. Name your time; I'll stand the test. Give me a spark of hope, and I'll fight through for it. Say just

this — "Prove I was mistaken," and by George, I'll prove it.

GAUNT (*looking up*). I make no such compacts. Go, and swear not at all.

ARETHUSA. Go, Kit! I keep the ring.

SCENE IV

ARETHUSA, GAUNT

ARETHUSA. Father, what have we done that you should be so cruel?

GAUNT (*laying down Bible, and rising*). Do you call me cruel? You speak after the flesh. I have done you this day a service that you will live to bless me for upon your knees.

ARETHUSA. He loves me, and I love him: you can never alter that; do what you will, father, that can never change. I love him, I believe in him, I will be true to him.

GAUNT. Arethusa, you are the sole thing death has left me on this earth; and I must watch over your carnal happiness and your eternal weal. You do not know what this implies to me. Your mother — my Hester — tongue cannot tell, nor heart conceive the pangs she suffered. If it lies in me, your life shall not be lost on that same reef of an ungodly husband. (*Goes out, C.*)

SCENE V

ARETHUSA

ARETHUSA. I thought the time dragged long and weary when I knew that Kit was homeward bound,

all the white sails a-blowing out towards England, and my Kit's face turned this way? (*She begins to dust.*) Sure, if my mother were here, she would understand and help us; she would understand a young maid's heart, though her own had never an ache; and she would love my Kit. (*Putting back the telescope.*) To think she died: husband and child — and so much love — she was taken from them all. Ah, there is no parting but the grave! And Kit and I both live, and both love each other; and here am I cast down? O, Arethusa, shame! And your love home from the deep seas, and loving you still; and the sun shining; and the world all full of hope? O, hope, you're a good word!

SCENE VI

ARETHUSA; *to her*, PEW

PEW (*singing without*) —

"Time for us to go!
Time for us to go!
And we'll keep the brig three p'ints away,
For it's time for us to go."

ARETHUSA. Who comes here? a seaman by his song, and father out! (*She tries the air.*) "Time for us to go!" It sounds a wild kind of song. (*Tap-tap;* PEW *passes the window.*) O, what a face — and blind!

PEW (*entering*). Kind Christian friends, take pity on a poor blind mariner, as lost his precious sight in the defence of his native country, England, and God bless King George!

ARETHUSA. What can I do for you, sailor?

PEW. Good Christian lady, help a poor blind mariner to a mouthful of meat. I've served His Majesty in every quarter of the globe; I've spoke with 'Awke and glorious Anson, as I might with you; and I've tramped it all night long, upon my sinful feet, and with a empty belly.

ARETHUSA. You shall not ask bread and be denied by a sailor's daughter and a sailor's sweetheart; and when my father returns he shall give you something to set you on your road.

PEW. Kind and lovely lady, do you tell me that you are in a manner of speaking alone? or do my ears deceive a poor blind seaman?

ARETHUSA. I live here with my father, and my father is abroad.

PEW. Dear, beautiful, Christian lady, tell a poor blind man your honoured name, that he may remember it in his poor blind prayers.

ARETHUSA. Sailor, I am Arethusa Gaunt.

PEW. Sweet lady, answer a poor blind man one other question: are you in a manner of speaking related to Cap'n John Gaunt? Cap'n John as in the ebony trade were known as Admiral Guinea?

ARETHUSA. Captain John Gaunt is my father.

PEW (*dropping the blind man's whine*). Lord, think of that now! They told me this was where he lived, and so it is. And here's old Pew, old David Pew, as was the Admiral's own bo'sun, colloguing in his old commander's parlour, with his old commander's gal (*seizes* ARETHUSA). Ah, and a bouncer you are, and no mistake.

ARETHUSA. Let me go! how dare you?

PEW. Lord love you, don't you struggle, now, don't you. (*She escapes into front R. corner, where he keeps her imprisoned.*) Ah, well, we'll get you again, my lovely woman. What a arm you've got — great god of love — and a face like a peach! I'm a judge, I am. (*She tries to escape; he stops her.*) No, you don't; O, I can hear a flea jump! [But it's here where I miss my deadlights. Poor old Pew; him as the ladies always would have for their fancy man and take no denial; here you are with your commander's daughter close aboard, and you can't so much as guess the colour of her lovely eyes. (*Singing*) —

"Be they black like ebony,
Or be they blue like to the sky."

Black like the Admiral's? or blue like his poor dear wife's? Ah, I was fond of that there woman, I was: the Admiral was jealous of me.] Arethusa, my dear, — my heart, what a 'and and arm you *have* got; I'll dream o' that 'and and arm, I will! — but as I was a-saying, does the Admiral ever in a manner of speaking refer to his old bo'sun David Pew? him as he fell out with about the black woman at Lagos, and almost slashed the shoulder off of him one morning before breakfast?

ARETHUSA. You leave this house.

PEW. Hey? (*he closes and seizes her again.*) Don't you fight, my lovely one: now don't make old blind Pew forget his manners before a female. What! you will? Stop that, or I'll have the arm right out of your body. (*He gives her arm a wrench.*)

ARETHUSA. O! help, help!

PEW. Stash your patter, damn you. (ARETHUSA *gives in.*) Ah, I thought it: Pew's way, Pew's way. Now, look you here, my lovely woman. If you sling in another word that isn't in answer to my questions, I'll pull your j'ints out one by one. Where's the Commander?

ARETHUSA. I have said: he is abroad.

PEW. When's he coming aboard again?

ARETHUSA. At any moment.

PEW. Does he keep his strength?

ARETHUSA. You'll see when he returns. (*He wrenches her arm again.*) Ah!

PEW. Is he still on piety?

ARETHUSA. O, he is a Christian man!

PEW. A Christian man, is he? Where does he keep his rum?

ARETHUSA. Nay, you shall steal nothing by my help.

PEW. No more I shall (*becoming amorous*). You're a lovely woman, that's what you are; how would you like old Pew for a sweetheart, hey? He's blind, is Pew, but strong as a lion; and the sex is his 'ole delight. Ah, them beautiful, beautiful lips! A kiss! Come!

ARETHUSA. Leave go, leave go!

PEW. Hey? you would?

ARETHUSA. Ah! (*She thrusts him down, and escapes to door, R.*)

SCENE VII

PEW (*picking himself up*). Ah, she's a bouncer, she is! Where's my stick? That's the sort of female for David Pew. Didn't she fight? and didn't she struggle?

and shouldn't I like to twist her lovely neck for her? Pew's way with 'em all: the prettier they was, the uglier he were to 'em. Pew's way: a way he had with him; and a damned good way too. (*Listens at L. door.*) That's her bedroom, I reckon; and she's double-locked herself in. Good again: it's a crying mercy the Admiral didn't come in. But you always loses your 'ed, Pew, with a female: that's what charms 'em. Now for business. The front door. No bar; on'y a big lock (*trying keys from his pocket*). Key one; no go. Key two; no go. Key three; ah, that does it. Ah! (*feeling key*) him with the three wards and the little 'un: good again! Now if I could only find a mate in this rotten country 'amlick: one to be eyes to me; I can steer, but I can't conn myself, worse luck! If I could only find a mate! And to-night, about three bells in the middle watch, old Pew will take a little cruise, and lay aboard his ancient friend the Admiral; or, barring that, the Admiral's old sea-chest — the chest he kept the shiners in aboard the brig. Where is it, I wonder? in his berth, or in the cabin here? It's big enough, and the brass bands is plain to feel by. (*Searching about with stick.*) Dresser — chair — (*knocking his head on the cupboard*). Ah! — O, corner cupboard. Admiral's chair — Admiral's table — Admiral's — hey! what's this? — a book — sheepskin — smells like a 'oly Bible. Chair (*his stick just avoids the chest*). No sea-chest. I must have a mate to see for me, to see for old Pew: him as had eyes like a eagle! Meanwhile, rum. Corner cupboard, of course (*tap-tapping*). 'Rum — rum — rum. Hey? (*He listens.*) Footsteps. Is it the Admiral? (*With the whine.*) Kind Christian friends ——

SCENE VIII

PEW; *to him* GAUNT

GAUNT. What brings you here?

PEW. Cap'n, do my ears deceive me? or is this my old commander?

GAUNT. My name is John Gaunt. Who are you, my man, and what's your business?

PEW. Here's the facks, so help me. A lovely female in this house, was Christian enough to pity the poor blind; and lo and be'old! who should she turn out to be but my old commander's daughter! "My dear," says I to her, "I was the Admiral's own particular bo'sun."—"La, sailor," she says to me, "how glad he'll be to see you!"—"Ah," says I, "won't he just—that's all."—"I'll go and fetch him," she says; "you make yourself at'ome." And off she went; and, Commander, here I am.

GAUNT (*sitting down*). Well?

PEW. Well, Cap'n?

GAUNT. What do you want?

PEW. Well, Admiral, in a general way, what I want in a manner of speaking is money and rum. (*A pause.*)

GAUNT. David Pew, I have known you a long time.

PEW. And so you have; aboard the old *Arethusa;* and you don't seem that cheered up as I'd looked for, with an old shipmate dropping in, one as has been seeking you two years and more—and blind at that. Don't you remember the old chantie?—

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we'd clapped the hatches on,
'Twas time for us to go."

What a note you had to sing, what a swaller for a pannikin of rum, and what a fist for the shiners! Ah, Cap'n, they didn't call you Admiral Guinea for nothing. I can see that old sea-chest of yours — her with the brass bands, where you kept your gold dust and doubloons: you know! — I can see her as well this minute as though you and me was still at it playing pŭt on the lid of her . . . . You don't say nothing, Cap'n? . . . Well, here it is: I want money and I want rum. You don't know what it is to want rum, you don't: it gets to that p'int, that you would kill a 'ole ship's company for just one guttle of it. What? Admiral Guinea, my old Commander, go back on poor old Pew? and him high and dry? [Not you! When we had words over the negro lass at Lagos, what did you do? fair dealings was your word: fair as between man and man; and we had it out with p'int and edge on Lagos sands. And you're not going back on your word to me, now I'm old and blind? No, nó! belay that, I say. Give me the old motto: Fair dealings, as between man and man.]

GAUNT. David Pew, it were better for you that you you were sunk in fifty fathom. I know your life; and first and last, it is one broadside of wickedness. You were a porter in a school, and beat a boy to death; you ran for it, turned slaver, and shipped with me, a green hand. Ay, that was the craft for you: that was the right craft, and I was the right captain; there was none worse that sailed to Guinea. Well, what came of that? In five years' time you made yourself the terror and abhorrence of your messmates. The worst hands detested you; your captain — that was me, John Gaunt,

the chief of sinners — cast you out for a Jonah. [Who was it stabbed the Portuguese and made off inland with his miserable wife? Who, raging drunk on rum, clapped fire to the barracoons and burned the poor soulless creatures in their chains?] Ay, you were a scandal to the Guinea coast, from Lagos down to Calabar? and when at last I sent you ashore, a marooned man — your shipmates, devils as they were, cheering and rejoicing to be quit of you — by heaven, it was a ton's weight off the brig!

PEW. Cap'n Gaunt, Cap'n Gaunt, these are ugly words.

GAUNT. What next? You shipped with Flint the Pirate. What you did then I know not; the deep seas have kept the secret: kept it, ay, and will keep against the Great Day. God smote you with blindness, but you heeded not the sign. That was His last mercy; look for no more. To your knees, man, and repent. Pray for a new heart; flush out your sins with tears; flee while you may from the terrors of the wrath to come.

PEW. Now, I want this clear: Do I understand that you're going back on me, and you'll see me damned first?

GAUNT. Of me you shall have neither money nor strong drink: not a guinea to spend in riot; not a drop to fire your heart with devilry.

PEW. Cap'n, do you think it wise to quarrel with me? I put it to you now, Cap'n, fairly as between man and man — do you think it wise?

GAUNT. I fear nothing. My feet are on the Rock. Begone! (*He opens the Bible and begins to read.*)

PEW (*after a pause*). Well, Cap'n, you know best, no doubt; and David Pew's about the last man, though I says it, to up and thwart an old Commander. You've been 'ard on David Pew, Cap'n: 'ard on the poor blind; but you'll live to regret it—ah, my Christian friend, you'll live to eat them words up. But there's no malice here: that ain't Pew's way; here's a sailor's hand upon it. . . . You don't say nothing? (GAUNT *turns a page.*) Ah, reading, was you? Reading, by thunder! Well, here's my respecks (*singing*)—

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
When the money's out, and the liquor's done,
Why, it's time for us to go."

(*He goes tapping up to door, turns on the threshold, and listens.* GAUNT *turns a page.* PEW, *with a grimace, strikes his hand upon the pocket with the keys, and goes.*)

DROP.

ACT II

The Stage represents the parlour of the "Admiral Benbow" inn. Fire-place, R., with high-backed settles on each side; in front of these, and facing the audience, R., a small table laid with a cloth. Tables, L., with glasses, pipes, etc. Broadside ballads on the wall. Outer door of inn, with half-door in L., corner back; door, R., beyond the fire-place; window with red half-curtains; spittoons; candles on both the front tables; night without.

SCENE I

PEW; *afterwards* MRS. DRAKE, *out and in*

PEW (*entering*). Kind Christian friends —— (*listening; then dropping the whine*). Hey? nobody! Hey? A grog-shop not two cable-lengths from the Admiral's back-door, and the Admiral not there? I never knew a seaman brought so low: he ain't but the bones of the man he used to be. Bear away for the New Jerusalem, and this is what you run aground on, is it? Good again; but it ain't Pew's way; Pew's way is rum. — Sanded floor. Rum is his word, and rum his motion. — Settle — chimbley — settle again — spittoon — table rigged for supper. Table — glass. (*Drinks heeltap.*) Brandy and water; and not enough of it to wet your eye; damn all greediness, I say. Pot (*drinks*), small beer — a drink that I ab'or like bilge! What I want is

rum. (*Calling, and rapping with stick on table.*) Halloa, there! House, ahoy!

MRS. DRAKE (*without*). Coming, sir, coming. (*She enters, R.*) What can I do——? (*Seeing* PEW.) Well I never did! Now, beggar-man, what's for you?

[PEW. Rum, ma'am, rum; and a bit o' supper.

MRS. DRAKE. And a bed to follow, I shouldn't wonder!

PEW. *And* a bed to follow: *if* you please.]

MRS. DRAKE. This is the "*Admiral Benbow*," a respectable house, and receives none but decent company; and I'll ask you to go somewhere else, for I don't like the looks of you.

PEW. Turn me away? Why, Lord love you, I'm David Pew — old David Pew — him as was Benbow's own particular cox'n. You wouldn't turn away old Pew from the sign of his late commander's 'ed? Ah, my British female, you'd have used me different if you'd seen me in the fight! [There laid old Benbow, both his legs shot off, in a basket, and the blessed spy-glass at his eye to that same hour: a picter, ma'am, of naval daring: when a round shot come, and took and knocked a bucketful of shivers right into my poor day-lights. "Damme," says the Admiral, "is that old Pew, *my* old Pew?" he says. — "It's old Pew, sir," says the first lootenant, "worse luck," he says. — "Then damme," says Admiral Benbow, "if that's how they serve a lion-'arted seaman, damme if I care to live," he says; and, ma'am, he laid down his spy-glass.]

MRS. DRAKE. Blind man, I don't fancy you, and that's the truth; and I'll thank you to take yourself off.

PEW. Thirty years have I fought for country and

king, and now in my blind old age I'm to be sent packing from a measly public 'ouse? Mark ye, ma'am, if I go, you take the consequences. Is this a inn? Or haint it? If it is a inn, then by act of parleyment, I'm free to sling my 'ammick. Don't you forget: this is a act of parleyment job, this is. You look out.

MRS. DRAKE. Why, what's to do with the man and his acts of parliament? I don't want to fly in the face of an act of parliament, not I. If what you say is true ——

PEW. True? If there's anything truer than a act of parleyment — Ah! you ask the beak. True? I've that in my 'art as makes me wish it wasn't.

MRS. DRAKE. I don't like to risk it. I don't like your looks, and you're more sea-lawyer than seaman to my mind. But I'll tell you what: if you can pay, you can stay. So there.

PEW. No chink, no drink? That's your motto, is it? Well, that's sense. Now, look here, ma'am, I ain't beautiful like you; but I'm good, and I'll give you warrant for it. Get me a noggin of rum, and suthin' to scoff, and a penny pipe, and a half-a-foot of baccy; and there's a guinea for the reckoning. There's plenty more in the locker; so bear a hand, and be smart. I don't like waiting; it ain't my way. (*Exit* MRS. DRAKE, *R.* PEW *sits at the table, R. The settle conceals him from all the upper part of the stage.*)

MRS. DRAKE (*re-entering*). Here's the rum, sailor.

PEW (*drinks*). Ah, rum! That's my sheet-anchor: rum and the blessed Gospel. Don't you forget that, ma'am: rum and the Gospel is old Pew's sheet-anchor. You can take for another while you're about it; and, I

say, short reckonings make long friends, hey? Where's my change?

MRS. DRAKE. I'm counting it now. There, there it is, and thank you for your custom. (*She goes out, R.*)

PEW (*calling after her*). Don't thank me, ma'am; thank the act of parleyment! Rum, fourpence; two penny pieces and a Willi'm-and-Mary tizzy makes a shilling; and a spade half-guinea is eleven and six (*re-enter* MRS. DRAKE *with supper, pipe, etc.*); and a blessed Majesty George the First crown-piece makes sixteen and six; and two shilling bits is eighteen and six; and a new half-crown makes — no it don't! O, no! Old Pew's too smart a hand to be bammed with a soft half-tusheroon.

MRS. DRAKE (*changing piece*). I'm sure I didn't know it, sailor.

PEW (*trying new coin between his teeth*). In course you didn't, my dear; but I did, and I thought I'd mention it. Is that my supper, hey? Do my nose deceive me? (*Sniffing and feeling.*) Cold duck? sage and onions? a round of double Gloster? and that noggin o' rum? Why, I declare if I'd stayed and took pot-luck with my old commander, Cap'n John Gaunt, he couldn't have beat this little spread, as I've got by act of parleyment.

MRS. DRAKE (*at knitting*). Do you know the captain, sailor?

PEW. Know him? I was that man's bo'sun, ma'am. In the Guinea trade, we was known as "Pew's Cap'n," and "Gaunt's Bo'sun," one for other like. We was like two brothers, ma'am. And a excellent cold duck, to be sure; and the rum lovely.

MRS. DRAKE. If you know John Gaunt, you know his daughter Arethusa.

PEW. What? Arethusa? Know her, says you? know her? Why, Lord love you, I was her god-father. ["Pew," says Jack Gaunt to me, "Pew," he says, "you're a man," he says; "I like a man to be a man," says he, "and damme," he says, "I like *you;* and sink me," says he, "if you don't promise and vow in the name of that new-born babe," he says, "why damme, Pew," says he, "you're not the man I take you for."] Yes, ma'am, I named that female; with my own 'ands I did; Arethusa, I named her; that was the name I give her; so now you know if I speak true. And if you'll be as good as get me another noggin of rum, why, we'll drink her 'elth with three times three. (*Exit* MRS. DRAKE: PEW *eating.* MRS. DRAKE *re-entering with rum.*)

[MRS. DRAKE. If what you say be true, sailor (and I don't say it isn't, mind!), it's strange that Arethusa and that godly man her father have never so much as spoke your name.

PEW. Why, that's so! And why, says you? Why, when I dropped in and paid my respecks this morning, do you think she knew me? No more'n a babe unborn! Why, ma'am, when I promised and vowed for her, I was the picter of a man-o'-war's man, I was: eye like a eagle; walked the deck in a hornpipe, foot up and foot down; v'ice as mellow as rum; 'and upon 'art, and all the females took dead aback at the first sight, Lord bless 'em! Know me? Not likely. And as for me, when I found her such a lovely woman — by the feel of her 'and and arm! — you might have

knocked me down with a feather. But here's where it is, you see: when you've been knocking about on blue water for a matter of two and forty year, shipwrecked here, and blown up there, and everywhere out of luck, and given over for dead by all your messmates and relations, why what it amounts to is this: nobody knows you, and you hardly knows yourself, and there you are; and I'll trouble you for another noggin of rum.

MRS. DRAKE. I think you've had enough.

PEW. I don't; so bear a hand. (*Exit* MRS. DRAKE; PEW *empties the glass.*) Rum, ah, rum, you're a lovely creature; they haven't never done you justice. (*Proceeds to fill and light pipe; re-enter* MRS. DRAKE *with rum.*)] And now, ma'am, since you're so genteel and amicable-like, what about my old commander? Is he, in a manner of speaking, on half pay? or is he living on his fortune, like a gentleman slaver ought?

MRS. DRAKE. Well, sailor, people talk, you know.

PEW. I know, ma'am; I'd have been rolling in my coach, if they'd have held their tongues.

MRS. DRAKE. And they do say that Captain Gaunt, for so pious a man, is little better than a miser.

PEW. Don't say it, ma'am; not to old Pew. Ah, how often have I up and strove with him! "Cap'n, live it down," says I. "Ah, Pew," says he, "you're a better man than I am," he says; "but damme," he says, "money," he says, "is like rum to me." (*Insinuating.*) And what about a old sea-chest, hey? a old sea-chest, strapped with brass bands?

MRS. DRAKE. Why, that'll be the chest in his parlour, where he has it bolted to the wall, as I've seen

with my own eyes; and so might you, if you had eyes to see with.

PEW. No, ma'am, that ain't good enough; you don't bam old Pew. You never was in that parlour in your life.

MRS. DRAKE. I never was? Well, I declare!

PEW. Well then, if you was, where's the chest? Beside the chimbley, hey? (*Winking.*) Beside the table with the 'oly Bible?

MRS. DRAKE. No, sailor, you don't get any information out of me.

PEW. What, ma'am? Not to old Pew? Why, my god-child showed it me herself, and I told her where she'd find my name — P, E, W, Pew — cut out on the starn of it; and sure enough she did. Why, ma'am, it was his old money-box when he was in the Guinea trade; and they do say he keeps the rhino in it still.

MRS. DRAKE. No, sailor, nothing out of me! And if you want to know, you can ask the Admiral himself! (*She crosses, L.*)

PEW. Hey! Old girl fly? Then I reckon I must have a mate, if it was the parish bull.

SCENE II

To these, KIT, *a little drunk*

KIT (*looking in over half-door*). Mrs. Drake! Mother! Where are you? Come and welcome the prodigal!

MRS. DRAKE (*coming forward to meet him as he enters;* PEW *remains concealed by the settle, smoking, drinking, and listening*). Lord bless us and save us, if it ain't my boy! Give us a kiss.

KIT. That I will, and twenty if you like, old girl. (*Kisses her.*)

MRS. DRAKE. O Kit, Kit, you've been at those other houses, where the stuff they give you, my dear, it is poison for a dog.

[KIT. Round with friends, mother: only round with friends.

MRS. DRAKE. Well, anyway, you'll take a glass just to settle it, from me. (*She brings the bottle, and fills or him.*) There, that's pure; that'll do you no harm.] But O, Kit, Kit, I thought you were done with all this Jack-a-shoring.

KIT. What cheer, mother? I'm only a sheet in the wind; and who's the worse for it but me?

MRS. DRAKE. Ah, and that dear young lady; and her waiting and keeping single these two years for the love of you!

KIT. She, mother? she's heart of oak, she's true as steel, and good as gold; and she has my ring on her finger, too. But where's the use? The Admiral won't look at me.

MRS. DRAKE. Why not? You're as good a man as him any day.

KIT. Am I? He says I'm a devil, and swears that none of his flesh and blood — that's what he said, mother! — should lie at my mercy. That's what cuts me. If it wasn't for the good stuff I've been taking aboard, and the jolly companions I've been seeing it out with, I'd just go and make a hole in the water, and be done with it, I would, by George!

MRS. DRAKE. That's like you men. Ah, we know you, we that keeps a public-house — we know you,

good and bad: you go off on a frolic and forget; and you never think of the women that sit crying at home.

KIT. Crying? Arethusa cry? Why, dame, she's the bravest-hearted girl in all broad England! Here, fill the glass! I'll win her yet. I drink to her; here's to her bright eyes, and here's to the blessed feet she walks upon!

PEW (*looking round the corner of the settle*). Spoke like a gallant seaman, every inch. Shipmate, I'm a man as has suffered, and I'd like to shake your fist, and drink a can of flip with you.

KIT (*coming down*). Hullo, my hearty! who the devil are you? Who's this, mother?

MRS. DRAKE. Nay, I know nothing about him. (*She goes out, R.*)

PEW. Cap'n, I'm a brother seaman, and my name is Pew, old David Pew, as you may have heard of in your time, he having sailed along of 'Awke and glorious Benbow, and a right 'and man to both.

KIT. Benbow? Steady, mate! D'ye mean to say you went to sea before you were born?

PEW. See now! The sign of this here inn was running in my 'ed, I reckon. Benbow, says you? no, not likely! Anson, I mean; Anson and Sir Edward 'Awke: that's the pair: I was their right 'and man.

KIT. Well, mate, you may be all that, and more; but you're a rum un to look at, anyhow.

PEW. Right you are, and so I am. But what is looks? It's the 'art that does it: the 'art is the seaman's star; and here's old David Pew's, a matter of fifty years at sea, but tough and sound as the British Constitootion.

KIT. You're right there, Pew. Shake hands upon it.

And you're a man they're down upon, just like myself, I see. We're a pair of plain, good-hearted, jolly tars; and all these 'longshore fellows cock a lip at us, by George. What cheer, mate?

ARETHUSA (*without*). Mrs. Drake! Mrs. Drake!

PEW. What, a female? hey? a female? Board her, board her, mate! I'm dark. (*He retires again behind, to table, R., behind settle.*)

ARETHUSA (*without*). Mrs. Drake!

MRS. DRAKE (*re-entering and running to door*). Here I am, my dear; come in.

SCENE III

To these, ARETHUSA

ARETHUSA. Ah, Kit, I've found you. I thought you would lodge with Mrs. Drake.

KIT. What? are you looking for your consort? Whistle, I'm your dog; I'll come to you. I've been toasting you fathom deep, my beauty; and with every glass I love you dearer.

ARETHUSA. Now Kit, if you want to please my father, this is not the way. Perhaps he thinks too much of the guineas: well, gather them — if you think me worth the price. Go you to your sloop, clinker built, eighty tons burthen — you see I remember, Skipper Kit! I don't deny I like a man of spirit; but if you care to please Captain Gaunt, keep out of taverns; and if you could carry yourself a bit more — more elderly!

[KIT. Can I? Would I? Ah, just couldn't and just won't I, then!

MRS. DRAKE. I hope, madam, you don't refer to my

house; a publican I may be, but tavern is a word that I don't hold with; and here there's no bad drink, and no loose company; and as for my blessedest Kit, I declare I love him like my own.

ARETHUSA. Why, who could help it, Mrs. Drake?]

KIT. Arethusa, you're an angel. Do I want to please Captain Gaunt? Why, that's as much as ask whether I love you. [I don't deny that his words cut me; for they did. But as for wanting to please him, if he was deep as the blue Atlantic, I would beat it out. And elderly, too? Aha, you witch, you're wise! Elderly? You've set the course; you leave me alone to steer it. Matrimony's my port, and love is my cargo.] That's a likely question, ain't it, Mrs. Drake? Do I want to please him! Elderly, says you? Why, see here: Fill up my glass, and I'll drink to Arethusa on my knees.

ARETHUSA. Why, you stupid boy, do you think that would please him?

KIT. On my knees I'll drink it! (*As he kneels and drains the glass,* GAUNT *enters, and he scrambles to his feet.*)

SCENE IV

To these, GAUNT

GAUNT. Arethusa, this is no place for you.

ARETHUSA. No, father.

GAUNT. I wish you had been spared this sight; but look at him, child, since you are here; look at God's image, so debased. And you, young man (*to* KIT), you have proved that I was right. Are you the husband for this innocent maid?

KIT. Captain Gaunt, I have a word to say to you.

Terror is your last word; you're bitter hard upon poor sinners, bitter hard and black — you that were a sinner yourself. These are not the true colours: don't deceive yourself; you're out of your course.

[GAUNT. Heaven forbid that I should be hard, Christopher. It is not I; it's God's law that is of iron. Think! if the blow were to fall now, some cord to snap within you, some enemy to plunge a knife into your heart; this room, with its poor taper light, to vanish; this world to disappear like a drowning man into the great ocean; and you, your brain still whirling, to be snatched into the presence of the eternal Judge: Christopher French, what answer would you make? For these gifts wasted, for this rich mercy scorned, for these high-handed bravings of your better angel,— what have you to say?

KIT. Well, sir, I want my word with you, and by your leave I'll have it out.

ARETHUSA. Kit, for pity's sake!

KIT. Arethusa, I don't speak to you, my dear: you've got my ring, and I know what that means. The man I speak to is Captain Gaunt. I came to-day as happy a man as ever stepped, and with as fair a look-out. What did you care? what was your reply? None of your flesh and blood, you said, should lie at the mercy of a wretch like me! Am I not flesh and blood that you should trample on me like that? Is that charity, to stamp the hope out of a poor soul?]

GAUNT. You speak wildly; or the devil of drink that is in you speaks instead.

KIT. You think me drunk? well, so I am, and whose fault is it but yours? It was I that drank; but you

take your share of it, Captain Gaunt: you it was that filled the can.

GAUNT. Christopher French, I spoke but for your good, your good and hers. "Woe unto him"—these are the dreadful words—"by whom offences shall come: it were better——" Christopher, I can but pray for both of us.

KIT. Prayers? Now I tell you freely, Captain Gaunt, I don't value your prayers. Deeds are what I ask; kind deeds and words—that's the true-blue piety: to hope the best and do the best, and speak the kindest. As for you, you insult me to my face; and then you'll pray for me? What's that? Insult behind my back is what I call it! No, sir; you're out of the course; you're no good man to my view, be you who you may.

MRS. DRAKE. O Christopher! To Captain Gaunt?

ARETHUSA. Father, father, come away!

KIT. Ah, you see? She suffers too; we all suffer. You spoke just now of a devil; well, I'll tell you the devil you have: the devil of judging others. And as for me, I'll get as drunk as Bacchus.

GAUNT. Come!

SCENE V

PEW, MRS. DRAKE, KIT

PEW (*coming out and waving his pipe*). Commander, shake! Hooray for old England! If there's anything in the world that goes to old Pew's 'art, it's argyment. Commander, you handled him like a babby, kept the weather gauge, and hulled him every shot. Commander, give it a name, and let that name be rum!

KIT. Ay, rum's the sailor's fancy. Mrs. Drake, a bottle and clean glasses.

MRS. DRAKE. Kit French, I wouldn't. Think better of it, there's a dear! And that sweet girl just gone!

PEW. Ma'am, I'm not a 'ard man; I'm not the man to up and force a act of parleyment upon a helpless female. But you see here: Pew's friends is sacred. Here's my friend here, a perfeck seaman, and a man with a 'ed upon his shoulders, and a man that, damme, I admire. He give you a order, ma'am: — march!

MRS. DRAKE. Kit, don't you listen to that blind man; he's the devil wrote upon his face.

PEW. Don't you insinuate against my friend. *He* ain't a child, I hope? *he* knows his business? Don't you get trying to go a lowering of my friend in his own esteem.

MRS. DRAKE. Well, I'll bring it, Kit; but it's against the grain. (*Exit.*)

KIT. I say, old boy, come to think of it, why should we? It's been glasses round with me all day. I've got my cargo.

PEW. You? and you just argy'd the 'ed off of Admiral Guinea? O stash that! *I* stand treat, if it comes to that!

KIT. What! Do I meet with a blind seaman and not stand him? That's not the man I am!

MRS. DRAKE (*re-entering with bottle and glasses.*) There!

PEW. Easy does it, ma'am.

KIT. Mrs. Drake, you had better trot.

MRS. DRAKE. Yes, I'll trot; and I trot with a sick heart, Kit French, to leave you drinking your wits away with that low blind man. For a low man you

are — a low blind man — and your clothes they would disgrace a scarecrow. I'll go to my bed, Kit; and O, dear boy, go soon to yours — the old room, you know; it's ready for you — and go soon and sleep it off; for you know, dear, they, one and all, regret it in the morning; thirty years I've kept this house, and one and all they regret it, dear.

PEW. Come now, you walk!

MRS. DRAKE. O, it's not for your bidding. You a seaman? The ship for you to sail in is the hangman's cart. — Good-night, Kit dear, and better company!

SCENE VI

PEW, KIT. *They sit at the other table, L.*

PEW. Commander, here's *her* 'ealth!

KIT. Ay, that's the line: *her* health! But that old woman there is a good old woman, Pew.

PEW. So she is, Commander. But there's no woman understands a seaman; now you and me, being both bred to it, we splice by natur'. As for A. G., if argyment can win her, why, she's yours. If I'd a-had your 'ed for argyment, damme, I'd a-been a Admiral, I would! And if argyment won't win her, well, see here, you put your trust in David Pew.

KIT. David Pew, I don't know who you are, David Pew; I never heard of you; I don't seem able to clearly see you. Mrs. Drake, she's a smart old woman, Pew and she says you've the devil in your face.

PEW. Ah, and why, says you? Because I up and put her in her place, when she forgot herself to you, Commander.

KIT. Well, Pew, that's so; you stood by me like a man. Shake hands, Pew; and we'll make a night of it, or we'll know why, old boy!

PEW. That's my way. That's Pew's way, that is. That's Pew's way all over. Commander, excuse the liberty; but when I was your age, making allowance for a lowlier station and less 'ed for argyment, I was as like you as two peas. I know it by the v'ice (*sings*)—

"We hadn't been three days at sea before we saw a sail,
So we clapped on every stitch would stand, although it blew a gale,
And we walked along full fourteen knots, for the barkie she did know,
As well as ever a soul on board, 'twas time for us to go."

Chorus, Cap'n!
PEW *and* KIT (*in chorus*)—

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
As well as ever a soul on board,
'Twas time for us to go."

PEW (*sings*)—

"We carried away the royal yard, and the stunsail boom was gone;
Says the skipper, 'They may go or stand, I'm damned if I don't crack on;
So the weather braces we'll round in, and the trysail set also,
And we'll keep the brig three p'ints away, for its time for us to go.'"

Give it mouth, Commander!
PEW *and* KIT (*in chorus*)—

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And we'll keep the brig three p'ints away,
For it's time for us to go."

PEW. I ain't sung like that since I sang to Admiral 'Awke, the night before I lost my eyes, I ain't. "Sink me!" says he, says Admiral 'Awke, my old commander (*touching his hat*), "sink me!" he says, "if that ain't 'art-of-oak," he says: "'art-of-oak," says he, "and a pipe like a bloody blackbird!" Commander, here's my respecks, and the devil fly away with Admiral Guinea!

KIT. I say, Pew, how's this? How do you know about Admiral Guinea? I say, Pew, I begin to think you know too much.

PEW. I ax your pardon; but as a man with a 'ed for argyment — and that's your best p'int o' sailing, Commander; intelleck is your best p'int — as a man with a 'ed for argyment, how do I make it out?

KIT. Aha, you're a sly dog, you're a deep dog, Pew; but you can't get the weather of Kit French. How do I make it out? I'll tell you. I make it out like this: Your name's Pew, ain't it? Very well. And you know Admiral Guinea, and that's his name, eh? Very well. Then you're Pew; and the Admiral's the Admiral; and you know the Admiral; and by George, that's all. Hey? Drink about, boys, drink about!

PEW. Lord love you, if I'd a-had a 'ed like yours! Why, the Admiral was my first cap'n. I was that man's bo'sun, I was, aboard the *Arethusa;* and we was like two brothers. Did you never hear of Guinea-land and the black ivory business? (*sings*) —

"A quick run to the south we had, and when we made the Bight
We kept the offing all day long and crossed the bar at night.
Six hundred niggers in the hold and seventy we did stow,
And when we'd clapped the hatches on, 'twas time for us to go."

Lay forward, lads!
KIT *and* PEW (*in chorus*) —

"Time for us to go," etc.

KIT. I say, Pew, I like you; you're a damned ugly dog; but I like you. But look ye here, Pew: fair does it, you know, or we part company this minute. If you and the Ad —— the Admirable were like brothers on the Guinea coast, why aren't you like brothers here?

PEW. Ah, *I* see you coming. What a 'ed! what a 'ed! Since Pew is a friend of the family, says you, why didn't he sail in and bear a hand, says you, when you was knocking the Admiral's ship about his ears in argyment?

KIT. Well, Pew, now you put a name to it, why not?

PEW. Ah, why not? There I recko'nise you. [Well, see here: argyment's my weakness, in a manner of speaking; I wouldn't a-borne down and spiled sport, not for gold untold, no, not for rum, I wouldn't! And besides, Commander, I put it to you, as between man and man, would it have been seaman-like to let on and show myself to a old shipmate, when he was yard-arm to yard-arm with a craft not half his metal, and getting blown out of water every broadside? Would it have been 'ansome? I put it to you, as between man and man.

KIT. Pew, I may have gifts; but I never thought of that. Why, no: not seaman-like. Pew, you've a heart; that's what I like you for.

PEW. Ah, that I have: you'll see. I wanted — now you follow me — I wanted to keep square with Admiral Guinea.] Why? says you. Well, put it that I know a

fine young fellow when I sees him; and put it that I wish him well; and put it, for the sake of argyment, that the father of that lovely female's in my power. Aha? Pew's Power! Why, in my 'ands he's like this pocket 'andke'cher. Now, brave boy, do you see?

KIT. No, Pew, my head's gone; I don't see.

PEW. Why, cheer up, Commander! You want to marry this lovely female?

KIT. Ay, that I do; but I'm not fit for her, Pew; I'm a drunken dog, and I'm not fit for her.

PEW. Now, Cap'n, you'll allow a old seaman to be judge: one as sailed with 'Awke and blessed Benb—— with 'Awke and noble Anson. You've been open and above-board with me, and I'll do the same by you: it being the case that you're hard hit about a lovely woman, which many a time and oft it has happened to old Pew; and him with a feeling 'art that bleeds for you, Commander; why look here: I'm that girl's godfather; promised and vowed for her, I did; and I like you; and you're the man for her; and, by the living Jacob, you shall splice!

KIT. David Pew, do you mean what you say?

PEW. Do I mean what I say? Does David Pew? Ask Admiral 'Awke! Ask old Admiral Byng in his coffin, where I laid him with these 'ands! Pew does, is what those naval commanders would reply. Mean it? I reckon so.

KIT. Then, shake hands. You're an honest man, Pew—old Pew!—and I'll make your fortune. But there's something else, if I could keep the run of it. O, ah! But *can* you? That's the point. Can you; don't you see?

PEW. Can I? You leave that to me; I'll bring you to your moorings; I'm the man that can, and I'm him that will. But only, look here, let's understand each other. You're a bold blade, ain't you? You won't stick at a trifle for a lovely female? You'll back me up? You're a man, ain't you? a man, and you'll see me through and through it, hey? Come; is that so? Are you fair and square and stick at nothing?

KIT. Me, Pew? I'll go through fire and water.

PEW. I'll risk it. — Well, then, see here, my son: another swallow and we jog.

KIT. No, not to-night, Pew, not to-night!

PEW. Commander, in a manner of speaking, wherefore?

KIT. Wherefore, Pew? 'Cause why, Pew? 'Cause I'm drunk, and be damned to you!

PEW. Commander, I ax your pardon; but, saving your presence, that's a lie. What? drunk? a man with a 'ed for argyment like that? Just you get up, and steady yourself on your two pins, and you'll be as right as ninepence.

[KIT. Pew, before we budge, let me shake your flipper again. You're heart of oak, Pew, sure enough; and if you can bring the Adam — Admirable about, why, damme, I'll make your fortune! How you're going to do it, I don't know; but I'll stand by; and I know you'll do it if anybody can. But I'm drunk, Pew; you can't deny that: I'm as drunk as a Plymouth fiddler, Pew; and how you're going to do it is a mystery to me.

PEW. Ah, you leave that to me. All I want is what I've got: your promise to stand by and bear a hand

(*producing a dark lantern*).] Now, here, you see, is my little glim; it ain't for me, because I'm blind, worse luck! and the day and night is the blessed same to David Pew. But you watch. You put the candle near me. Here's what there ain't mony blind men could do, take the pick o' them! (*lighting a screw of paper, and with that, the lantern*) Hey? That's it. Hey? Go and pity the poor blind!

KIT (*while* PEW *blows out the candles*). But I say, Pew, what do you want with it?

PEW. To see by, my son. (*He shuts the lantern and puts it in his pocket. Stage quite dark. Moonlight at window.*) All ship-shape? No sparks about? No? Come, then, lean on me and heave ahead for the lovely female. (*Singing sotto voce*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we'd clapped the hatches on,
'Twas time for us to go."

DROP

ACT III

The Stage represents the Admiral's house, as in Act I. GAUNT *seated, is reading aloud;* ARETHUSA *sits at his feet. Candles*

SCENE I

ARETHUSA, GAUNT

[GAUNT (*reading*). "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." (*He closes the book.*) Amen.

ARETHUSA. Amen. Father, there spoke my heart.]

GAUNT. Arethusa, the Lord in his mercy has seen right to vex us with trials of many kinds. It is a little matter to endure the pangs of the flesh: the smart of wounds, the passion of hunger and thirst, the heaviness of disease; and in this world I have learned to take thought for nothing save the quiet of your soul. It is through our affections that we are smitten with the true pain, even the pain that kills.

ARETHUSA. And yet this pain is our natural lot.

Father, I fear to boast, but I know that I can bear it. Let my life, then, flow like common lives, each pain rewarded with some pleasure, each pleasure linked with some pain: nothing pure whether for good or evil: and my husband, like myself, and all the rest of us, only a poor, kind-hearted sinner, striving for the better part. What more could any woman ask?

GAUNT. Child, child, your words are like a sword. What would she ask? Look upon me whom, in the earthly sense, you are commanded to respect. Look upon me: do I bear a mark? is there any outward sign to bid a woman avoid and flee from me?

ARETHUSA. I see nothing but the face I love.

GAUNT. There is none: nor yet on the young man Christopher, whose words still haunt and upbraid me. Yes, I am hard; I was born hard, born a tyrant, born to be what I was, a slaver captain. But to-night, and to save you, I will pluck my heart out of my bosom. You shall know what makes me what I am; you shall hear, out of my own life, why I dread and deprecate this marriage. Child, do you remember your mother?

ARETHUSA. Remember her? Ah, if she had been here to-day!

GAUNT. It is thirteen years since she departed, and took with her the whole sunshine of my life. Do you remember the manner of her departure? You were a child, and cannot; but I can and do. Remember? shall I ever forget? Here, or hereafter, ever forget! Ten years she was my wife, and ten years she lay a-dying. Arethusa, she was a saint on earth; and it was I that killed her.

ARETHUSA. Killed her? my mother? You?

GAUNT. Not with my hand; for I loved her. I would not have hurt one hair upon her head. But she got her death by me, as sure as by a blow.

ARETHUSA. I understand — I can see: you brood on trifles, misunderstandings, unkindnesses you think them; though my mother never knew of them, or never gave them a second thought. It is natural, when death has come between.

GAUNT. I married her from Falmouth. She was comely as the roe; I see her still — her dove's eyes and her smile! I was older than she; and I had a name for hardness, a hard and wicked man; but she loved me — my Hester! — and she took me as I was. O how I repaid her trust! Well, our child was born to us; and we named her after the brig I had built and sailed, the old craft whose likeness — older than you, girl — stands there above our heads. And so far, that was happiness. But she yearned for my salvation; and it was there I thwarted her. My sins were a burden upon her spirit, a shame to her in this world, her terror in the world to come. She talked much and often of my leaving the devil's trade I sailed in. She had a tender and a Christian heart, and she would weep and pray for the poor heathen creatures that I bought and sold and shipped into misery, till my conscience grew hot within me. I've put on my hat, and gone out and made oath that my next cargo should be my last; but it never was, that oath was never kept. So I sailed again and again for the Guinea coast, until the trip came that was to be my last indeed. Well, it fell out that we had good luck trading, and I stowed the brig with these poor heathen as full as she could hold. We

had a fair run westward till we were past the line; but one night the wind rose and there came a hurricane, and for seven days we were tossed on the deep seas, in the hardest straits, and every hand on deck. For several days they were battened down: all that time we heard their cries and lamentations, but worst at the beginning; and when at last, and near dead myself, I crept below — O! some they were starved, some smothered, some dead of broken limbs; and the hold was like a lazar-house in the time of the anger of the Lord!

ARETHUSA. O!

GAUNT. It was two hundred and five that we threw overboard: two hundred and five lost souls that I had hurried to their doom. I had many die with me before; but not like that — not such a massacre as that; and I stood dumb before the sight. For I saw I was their murderer — body and soul their murderer; and, Arethusa, my Hester knew it. That was her death-stroke: it felled her. She had long been dying slowly; but from the hour she heard that story, the garment of the flesh began to waste and perish, the fountains of her life dried up; she faded before my face; and in two months from my landing — O Hester, Hester, would God I had died for thee!

ARETHUSA. Mother! O poor soul! O poor father! O father, it was hard on you.

GAUNT. The night she died, she lay there, in her bed. She took my hand. "I am going," she said, "to heaven. For Christ's sake," she said, "come after me, and bring my little maid. I'll be waiting and wearying till you come;" and she kissed my hand, the hand that

killed her. At that I broke out calling on her to stop, for it was more than I could bear. But no, she said she must still tell me of my sins, and how the thought of them had bowed down her life. "And O!" she said, "if I couldn't prevail on you alive, let my death." . . . Well, then, she died. What have I done since then? I've laid my course for Hester. Sin, temptation, pleasure, all this poor shadow of a world, I saw them not: I saw my Hester waiting, waiting and wearying. I have made my election sure; my sins I have cast them out. Hester, Hester, I will come to you, poor waiting one; and I'll bring your little maid: ay, dearest soul, I'll bring your little maid safe with me!

ARETHUSA. O teach me how! Show me the way! only show me. — O mother, mother! — If it were paved with fire, show me the way, and I will walk it bare-foot!

GAUNT. They call me a miser. They say that in this sea-chest of mine I hoard my gold. (*He passes R. to chest, takes out key, and unlocks it.*) They think my treasure and my very soul are locked up here. They speak after the flesh, but they are right. See!

ARETHUSA. Her watch? the wedding ring? O father, forgive me!

GAUNT. Ay, her watch that counted the hours when I was away; they were few and sorrowful, my Hester's hours; and this poor contrivance numbered them. The ring — with that I married her. This chain, it's of Guinea gold; I brought it home for her, the year before we married, and she wore it to her wedding. It was a vanity: they are all vanities; but they are the treasure of my soul. Below here, see, her wedding dress. Ay, the watch has stopped: dead, dead. And I know that

my Hester died of me; and day and night, asleep and awake, my soul abides in her remembrance.

ARETHUSA. And you come in your sleep to look at them. O poor father! I understand — I understand you now.

GAUNT. In my sleep? Ay? do I so? My Hester!

ARETHUSA. And why, why did you not tell me? I thought — I was like the rest! — I feared you were a miser. O, you should have told me; I should have been so proud — so proud and happy. I knew you loved her; but not this, not this.

GAUNT. Why should I have spoken? It was all between my Hester and me.

ARETHUSA. Father, may I speak? May I tell you what my heart tells me? You do not understand about my mother. You loved her — O, as few men can love. And she loved you: think how she loved you! In this world, you know — you have told me — there is nothing perfect. All we men and women have our sins; and they are a pain to those that love us, and the deeper the love, the crueller the pain. That is life; and it is life we ask, not heaven; and what matter for the pain, if only the love holds on? Her love held: then she was happy! Her love was immortal; and when she died, her one grief was to be parted from you, her one hope to welcome you again.

GAUNT. And you, Arethusa: I was to bring her little maid.

ARETHUSA. God bless her, yes, and me! But, father, can you not see that she was blessed among women?

GAUNT. Child, child, you speak in ignorance; you touch upon griefs you cannot fathom.

ARETHUSA. No, dearest, no. She loved you, loved you and died of it. Why else do women live? What would I ask but just to love my Kit and die for him, and look down from heaven, and see him keep my memory holy and live the nobler for my sake?

GAUNT. Ay, do you so love him?

ARETHUSA. Even as my mother loved my father.

GAUNT. Ay? Then we will see. What right have I —— You are your mother's child: better, tenderer, wiser than I. Let us seek guidance in prayer. Good-night, my little maid.

ARETHUSA. O father, I know you at last.

SCENE II

GAUNT *and* ARETHUSA *go out, L., carrying the candles. Stage dark. A distant clock chimes the quarters, and strikes one. Then, the tap-tapping of Pew's stick is heard without; the key is put into the lock; and enter* PEW, *C., he pockets key, and is followed by* KIT, *with dark lantern.*

PEW. Quiet, you lubber! Can't you foot it soft, you that has daylights and a glim?

KIT. All right, old boy. How the devil did we get through the door? Shall I knock him up?

PEW. Stow your gab (*seizing his wrist*). Under your breath!

KIT. Avast that! You're a savage dog, aren't you?

PEW. Turn on that glim.

KIT. It's as right as a trivet, Pew. What next? By George, Pew, I'll make your fortune.

PEW. Here, now, look round this room, and sharp. D'ye see a old sea-chest?

KIT. See it, Pew? why, d'ye think I'm blind?

PEW. Take me across, and let me feel of her. Mum; catch my hand. Ah, that's her (*feeling the chest*), that's the Golden Mary. Now, see here, my bo, if you've the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit, this girl is yours; if you hain't, and think to sheer off, I'm blind, but I'm deadly.

KIT. You'll keep a civil tongue in your head all the same. I'll take threats from nobody, blind or not. Let's knock up the Admiral and be done with it. What I want is to get rid of this dark lantern. It makes me feel like a housebreaker, by George.

PEW (*seated on chest*). You follow this. I'm sick of drinking bilge, when I might be rolling in my coach, and I'm dog-sick of Jack Gaunt. Who's he to be wallowing in gold, when a better man is groping crusts in the gutter and spunging for rum? Now, here in this blasted chest is the gold to make men of us for life: gold, ay, gobs of it; and writin's too — things that if I had the proof of 'em I'd hold Jack Gaunt to the grindstone till his face was flat. I'd have done it single-handed; but I'm blind, worse luck: I'm all in the damned dark here, poking with a stick — Lord, burn up with lime the eyes that saw it! That's why I raked up you. Come, out with your iron, and prise the lid off. You shall touch your snack, and have the wench for nothing; ay, and fling her in the street, when done.

KIT. So you brought me here to steal, did you?

PEW. Ay did I; and you shall. I'm a biter: I bring blood.

KIT. Now, Pew, you came here on my promise, or I'd kill you like a rat. As it is, out of that door! One, two, three (*drawing his cutlass*), and off!

PEW (*leaping at his throat, and with a great voice*). Help! murder! thieves!

SCENE III

To these ARETHUSA, GAUNT, *with lights. Stage light.* PEW *has* KIT *down, and is throttling him*

PEW. I've got him, Cap'n. What, kill my old commander, and rob him of his blessed child? Not with old Pew!

GAUNT. Get up, David: can't you see you're killing him? Unhand, I say.

ARETHUSA. In heaven's name, who is it?

PEW. It's a damned villain, my pretty; and his name, to the best of my belief, is French.

ARETHUSA. Kit? Kit French? Never!

KIT (*rising*). He's done for me. (*Falls on chest.*)

[PEW. Don't you take on about him, ducky; he ain't worth it. Cap'n Gaunt, I took him and I give him up. You was 'ard on me this morning, Cap'n: this is my way — Pew's way, this is — of paying of you out.

ARETHUSA. Father, this is the blind man that came while you were abroad. Sure you'll not listen to *him*. And you, Kit, you, what is this?

KIT. Captain Gaunt, that blind devil has half-throttled me. He brought me here — I can't speak — he has almost killed me — and I'd been drinking too.

GAUNT. And you, David Pew, what do you say?]

PEW. Cap'n, the rights of it is this. Me and that young man there was partaking in a friendly drop of rum at the *Admiral Benbow* inn; and I'd just proposed his blessed Majesty, when the young man he ups and says to me: "Pew," he says, "I like you, Pew: you're a true seaman," he says; "and I'm one as sticks at nothing; and damme, Pew," he says, "I'll make your fortune." [Can he deny as them was his words? Look at him, you as has eyes: no, he cannot. "Come along of me," he says, "and damme, I'll make your fortune."] Well, Cap'n, he lights a dark lantern (which you'll find it somewhere on the floor, I reckon), and out we goes, me follerin' his lead, as I thought was 'art-of-oak and a true-blue mariner; and the next I knows is, here we was in here, and him a-askin' me to 'old the glim, while he prised the lid off of your old sea-chest with his cutlass.

GAUNT. The chest? (*He leaps, R., and examines chest.*) Ah!

PEW. Leastways, I was to 'elp him, by his account of it, while he nailed the rhino, and then took and carried off that lovely maid of yours; for a lovely maid she is, and one as touched old Pew's 'art. Cap'n, when I 'eard that, my blood biled. "Young man," I says, "you don't know David Pew," I says; and with that I ups and does my dooty by him, cutlass and all, like a lion-'arted seaman, though blind. [And then in comes you, and I gives him up: as you know for a fack is true, and I'll subscribe at the Assizes. And that, if you was to cut me into junks, is the truth, the 'ole truth, and nothing but the truth, world without end, so help me, amen; and if you'll 'and me over the 'oly Bible, me

not having such a thing about me at the moment, why, I'll put a oath upon it like a man.]

ARETHUSA. Father, have you heard?

[GAUNT. I know this man, Arethusa, and the truth is not in him.

ARETHUSA. Well, and why do we wait? We know Kit, do we not?

KIT. Ay, Captain, you know the pair of us, and you can see his face and mine.]

GAUNT. Christopher, the facts are all against you. I find you here in my house at midnight: you who at least had eyes to see, and must have known whither you were going. It was this man, not you, who called me up: and when I came in, it was he who was uppermost and who gave you up to justice. This unsheathed cutlass is yours; there hangs the scabbard, empty; and as for the dark lantern, of what use is light to the blind? and who could have trimmed and lighted it but you?

PEW. Ah, Cap'n, what a 'ed for argyment!

KIT. And now, sir, that you have spoken, I claim the liberty to speak on my side.

GAUNT. Not so. I will first have done with this man. David Pew, it were too simple to believe your story as you tell it; but I can find no testimony against you. From whatever reason, assuredly you have done me service. Here are five guineas to set you on your way. Begone at once; and while it is yet time, think upon your repentance.

PEW. Cap'n, here's my respecks. You've turned a pious man, Cap'n; it does my 'art good to 'ear you. But you ain't the only one. O no! I came about and paid off on the other tack before you, I reckon: you

ask the Chaplain of the Fleet else, as called me on the quarter-deck before old Admiral 'Awke himself (*touching his hat*), my old commander. ["David Pew," he says, "five-and-thirty year have I been in this trade, man and boy," that chaplain says, "and damme, Pew," says he, "if ever I seen the seaman that could rattle off his catechism within fifty mile of you. Here's five guineas out of my own pocket," he says; "and what's more to the pint," he says, "I'll speak to my reverend brother-in-law, the Bishop of Dover," he says; "and if ever you leave the sea, and wants a place as beadle, why damme," says he, "you go to him, for you're the man for him, and him for you."

GAUNT. David Pew, you never set your foot on a King's ship in all your life. There lies the road.

PEW. Ah, you was always a 'ard man, Cap'n, and a 'ard man to believe, like Didymus the 'Ebrew prophet. But it's time for me to go, and I'll be going. My service to you, Cap'n: and I kiss my 'and to that lovely female. (*Singing*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us to go,
And when we'd clapped the hatches on,
'Twas time for us to go."

SCENE IV

KIT, ARETHUSA, GAUNT

ARETHUSA. Now, Kit?

KIT. Well, sir, and now?

GAUNT. I find you here in my house at this untimely and unseemly hour; I find you there in company with

one who, to my assured knowledge, should long since have swung in the wind at Execution Dock. What brought you? Why did you open my door while I slept to such a companion? Christopher French, I have two treasures. One (*laying his hand on* ARETHUSA'S *shoulder*) I know you covet: Christopher, is this your love?

KIT. Sir, I have been fooled and trapped. That man declared he knew you, declared he could make you change your mind about our marriage. I was drunk, sir, and I believed him: heaven knows I am sober now, and can see my folly; but I believed him then, and followed him. He brought me here, he told me your chest was full of gold that would make men of us for life. At that I saw my fault, sir, and drew my cutlass; and he, in the wink of an eye, roared out for help, leaped at my throat like a weasel and had me rolling on the floor. He was quick, and I, as I tell you, sir, was off my balance.

GAUNT. Is this man, Pew, your enemy?

KIT. No, sir; I never saw him till to-night.

GAUNT. Then, if you must stand the justice of your country, come to the proof with a better plea. What? lantern and cutlass yours; you the one that knew the house; you the one that saw; you the one overtaken and denounced; and you spin me a galley yarn like that? If that is all your defence, you'll hang, sir, hang.

ARETHUSA. Ah! . . . Father, I give him up: I will never see him, never speak to him, never think of him again; I take him from my heart; I give myself wholly up to you and to my mother; I will obey

you in every point — O, not at a word merely — at a finger raised! I will do all this; I will do anything — anything you bid me; I swear it in the face of heaven. Only — Kit! I love him, father, I love him. Let him go.

[GAUNT. Go?

ARETHUSA. You let the other. Open the door again — for my sake, father — in my mother's name — O, open the door and let him go.]

KIT. Let me go? My girl, if you had cast me out this morning, good and well: I would have left you, though it broke my heart. But it's a changed story now; now I'm down on my luck, and you come and stab me from behind. I ask no favour, and I'll take none; I stand here on my innocence, and God helping me I'll clear my good name, and get your love again, if it's love worth having... [Now, Captain Gaunt, I've said my say, and you may do your pleasure. I am my father's son, and I never feared to face the truth.

GAUNT. You have spoken like a man, French, and you may go. I leave you free.

KIT. Nay, sir, not so: not with my will. I'm accused and counted guilty; the proofs are against me; the girl I love has turned upon me. I'll accept no mercy at your hands.] Captain Gaunt, I am your prisoner.

ARETHUSA. Kit, dear Kit ——

GAUNT. Silence! Young man, I have offered you liberty without bond or condition. You refuse. You shall be judged. Meanwhile (*opening the door, R.*), you will go in here. I keep your cutlass. The night brings counsel: to-morrow shall decide. (*He locks* KIT *in, leaving the key in the door.*)

SCENE V

GAUNT, ARETHUSA, *afterwards* PEW

ARETHUSA. Father, you believe in him; you do; I know you do.

GAUNT. Child, I am not given to be hasty. I will pray and sleep upon this matter. (*A knocking at the door, C.*) Who knocks so late? (*He opens.*)

PEW (*entering*). Cap'n, shall I fetch the constable?

GAUNT. No.

PEW. No? Have ye killed him?

GAUNT. My man, I'll see you into the road. (*He takes* PEW *by the arm, and goes out with him.*)

SCENE VI

ARETHUSA

ARETHUSA. (*Listens; then running to door, R.*) Kit — dearest Kit! wait! I will come to you soon. (GAUNT *re-enters, C., as the drop falls.*)

ACT IV

The Stage represents the Admiral's house, as in Acts I. and III. A chair, L., in front. As the curtain rises, the Stage is dark. Enter ARETHUSA, *L., with candle; she lights another; and passes to door, R., which she unbolts. Stage light*

SCENE I

ARETHUSA, KIT

ARETHUSA. Come, dear Kit, come!

KIT. Well, I'm here.

ARETHUSA. O Kit, you are not angry with me?

KIT. Have I reason to be pleased?

ARETHUSA. Kit, I was wrong. Forgive me.

KIT. O yes. I forgive you. I suppose you meant it kindly; but there are some kindnesses a man would rather die than take a gift of. When a man is accused, Arethusa, it is not that he fears the gallows — it's the shame that cuts him. At such a time as that, the way to help was to stand to your belief. You should have nailed my colours to the mast, not spoke of striking them. If I were to be hanged to-morrow, and your love there, and a free pardon and a dukedom on the other side — which would I choose?

ARETHUSA. Kit, you must judge me fairly. It was not my life that was at stake, it was yours. Had it been mine — mine, Kit — what had you done, then?

KIT. I am a downright fool; I saw it inside out. Why, give you up, by George!

ARETHUSA. Ah, you see! Now you understand. It was all pure love. When he said that word—O!—death and that disgrace! . . . But I know my father. He fears nothing so much as the goodness of his heart; and yet it conquers. He would pray, he said; and to-night, and by the kindness of his voice, I knew he was convinced already. All that is wanted, is that you should forgive me.

KIT. Arethusa, if you looked at me like that I'd forgive you piracy on the high seas. I was only sulky; I was boxed up there in the black dark, and couldn't see my hand. It made me pity that blind man, by George!

ARETHUSA. O, that blind man! The fiend! He came back, Kit: did you hear him? he thought we had killed you—you!

KIT. Well, well, it serves me right for keeping company with such a swab.

ARETHUSA. One thing puzzles me: how did you get in? I saw my father lock the door.

KIT. Ah, how? That's just it. I was a sheet in the wind, you see. How did we? He did it somehow. . . . By George, he had a key! He can get in again.

ARETHUSA. Again? that man!

KIT. Ay, can he! Again! When he likes!

ARETHUSA. Kit, I am afraid. O Kit, he will kill my father.

KIT. Afraid. I'm glad of that. Now, you'll see I'm worth my salt at something. Ten to one he's back to Mrs. Drake's. I'll after, and lay him aboard.

ARETHUSA. O Kit, he is too strong for you.

KIT. Arethusa, that's below the belt! Never you fear; I'll give a good account of him.

ARETHUSA (*taking cutlass from the wall*). You'll be none the worse for this, dear.

KIT. That's so (*making cuts*). All the same, I'm half ashamed to draw on a blind man; it's too much odds. (*He leans suddenly against the table.*) Ah!

ARETHUSA. Kit! Are you ill?

KIT. My head's like a humming top; it serves me right for drinking.

ARETHUSA. O, and the blind man! (*She runs, L., to the corner cupboard, brings a bottle and glass, and fills and offers glass.*) Here, lad, drink that.

KIT. To you! That's better. (*Bottle and glass remain on* GAUNT'S *table.*)

ARETHUSA. Suppose you miss him?

KIT. Miss him! The road is straight; and I can hear the tap-tapping of that stick a mile away.

ARETHUSA (*listening*). St! my father is stirring in his room!

KIT. Let me get clear; tell him why when I'm gone. The door——?

ARETHUSA. Locked!

KIT. The window!

ARETHUSA. Quick, quick! (*She unfastens R. window, by which* KIT *goes out.*)

SCENE II

ARETHUSA, GAUNT *entering L.*

ARETHUSA. Father, Kit is gone. . . . He is asleep.

GAUNT. Waiting, waiting and wearying. The years,

they go so heavily, my Hester still waiting! (*He goes R. to chest, which he opens.*) That is your chain; it's of Guinea gold; I brought it you from Guinea. (*Taking out chain.*) You liked it once; it pleased you long ago; O, why not now — why will you not be happy now? . . . I swear this is my last voyage; see, I lay my hand upon the Holy Book and swear it. One more venture — for the child's sake, Hester; you don't think upon your little maid.

ARETHUSA. Ah, for my sake, it was for my sake!

GAUNT. Ten days out from Lagos. That's a strange sunset, Mr. Yeo. All hands shorten sail! Lay aloft there, look smart! . . . What's that? Only the negroes in the hold. . . . Mr. Yeo, she can't live long at this; I have a wife and child in Barnstaple. . . . Christ, what a sea! Hold on, for God's sake — hold on fore and aft! Great God! (*as though the sea were making a breach over the ship at the moment*).

ARETHUSA. O!

GAUNT. They seem quieter down below there. . . . No water — no light — no air — seven days battened down, and the seas mountain high, and the ship labouring hell-deep! Two hundred and five, two hundred and five, two hundred and five — all to eternal torture!

ARETHUSA. O pity him, pity him! Let him sleep, let him forget! Let her prayers avail in heaven, and let him rest!

GAUNT. Hester, no, don't smile at me. Rather tears! I have seen you weep — often, often; two hundred and five times. Two hundred and five! (*With ring.*) Hester, here is your ring (*he tries to put the ring on his finger*). How comes it in my hand? Not fallen off again? O

no, impossible! it was made smaller, dear, it can't have fallen off! Ah, you waste away. You must live, you must, for the dear child's sake, for mine, Hester, for mine! Ah, the child. Yes. Who am I to judge? Poor Kit French! And she, your little maid, she's like you, Hester, and she will save him! How should a man be saved without a wife?

ARETHUSA. O father, if you could but hear me thank and bless you! (*The tapping of Pew's stick is heard approaching.* GAUNT *passes L. front and sits.*)

GAUNT (*beginning to count the taps*). One — two — two hundred and five ——

ARETHUSA (*listening*). God help me, the blind man! (*She runs to door, C.; the key is put into the lock from without, and the door opens.*)

SCENE III

ARETHUSA (*at back of stage by the door*); GAUNT (*front L.*); *to these,* PEW, *C.*

PEW (*sotto voce*). All snug. (*Coming down.*) So that was you, my young friend Christopher, as shot by me on the road; and so you was hot foot after old Pew? Christopher, my young friend, I reckon I'll have the bowels out of that chest, and I reckon you'll be lagged and scragged for it. (*At these words* ARETHUSA *locks the door, and takes the key.*) What's that? All still. There's something wrong about this room. Pew, my 'art of oak, you're queer to-night; brace up, and carry on. Where's the tool? (*Producing knife.*) Ah, here she is; and now for the chest; and the gold; and rum

—rum—rum. What! Open? . . . old clothes, by God! . . . He's done me; he's been before me; he's bolted with the swag; that's why he ran: Lord wither and waste him forty year for it! O Christopher, if I had my fingers on your throat! Why didn't I strangle the soul out of him? I heard the breath squeak in his weasand; and Jack Gaunt pulled me off. Ah, Jack, that's another I owe you. My pious friend, if I was God Almighty for five minutes! (GAUNT *rises and begins to pace the stage like a quarterdeck, L.*) What's that? A man's walk. He don't see me, thank the blessed dark! But it's time to slip, my bo. (*He gropes his way stealthily till he comes to Gaunt's table, where he burns his hand in the candle.*) A candle—lighted—then it's bright as day! Lord God, doesn't he see me? It's the horrors come alive. (GAUNT *draws near and turns away.*) I'll go mad, mad! (*He gropes to the door, stopping and starting.*) Door. (*His voice rising for the first time, sharp with terror.*) Locked? Key gone? Trapped! Keep off—keep off of me—keep away! (*Sotto voce again.*) Keep your head, Lord have mercy, keep your head. I'm wet with sweat. What devil's den is this? I must out—out! (*He shakes the door vehemently.*) No? Knife it is then—knife—knife—knife! (*He moves with the knife raised towards* GAUNT, *intently listening and changing his direction as* GAUNT *changes his position on the stage.*)

ARETHUSA (*rushing to intercept him*). Father, father, wake!

GAUNT. Hester, Hester! (*He turns, in time to see* ARETHUSA *grapple* PEW *in the centre of the Stage, and* PEW *force her down.*)

ARETHUSA. Kit! Kit!
PEW (*with the knife raised*). Pew's way!

SCENE IV

To these, KIT

(*He leaps through window, R., and cuts* PEW *down. At the same moment,* GAUNT, *who has been staring helplessly at his daughter's peril, fully awakes.*)

GAUNT. Death and blood! (KIT, *helping* ARETHUSA, *has let fall the cutlass.* GAUNT *picks it up and runs on* PEW.) Damned mutineer, I'll have your heart out! (*He stops, stands staring, drops cutlass, falls upon his knees.*) God forgive me! Ah, foul sins, would you blaze forth again? Lord, close your ears! Hester, Hester, hear me not! Shall all these years and tears be unavailing?

ARETHUSA. Father, I am not hurt.

GAUNT. Ay, daughter, but my soul — my lost soul!

PEW (*rising on his elbow*). Rum? You've done me. For God's sake, rum. (ARETHUSA *pours out a glass, which* KIT *gives to him.*) Rum? This ain't rum; it's fire! (*With great excitement.*) What's this? I don't like rum? (*Feebly.*) Ay, then, I'm a dead man, and give me water.

GAUNT. Now even his sins desert him.

PEW (*drinking water*). Jack Gaunt, you've always been my rock ahead. It's thanks to you I've got my papers, and this time I'm shipped for Fiddler's Green. Admiral, we ain't like to meet again, and I'll give you a toast: Here's Fiddler's Green, and damn all lubbers!

(*Seizing* GAUNT's *arm.*) I say — fair dealings, Jack! — none of that heaven business: Fiddler's Green's my port, now, ain't it?

GAUNT. David, you've hove short up, and God forbid that I deceive you. Pray, man, pray; for in the place to which you are bound there is no mercy and no hope.

PEW. Ay, my lass, you're black, but your blood's red, and I'm all a-muck with it. Pass the rum, and be damned to you. (*Trying to sing*) —

"Time for us to go,
Time for us ——"

(*He dies.*)

GAUNT. But for the grace of God, there lies John Gaunt! Christopher, you have saved my child; and I, I, that was blinded with self-righteousness, have fallen. Take her, Christopher; but O, walk humbly!

CURTAIN

MACAIRE

A MELODRAMATIC FARCE IN THREE ACTS

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PERSONS REPRESENTED

ROBERT MACAIRE.
BERTRAND.
DUMONT, Landlord of the *Auberge des Adrets.*
CHARLES, a Gendarme, Dumont's supposed son.
GORIOT.
THE MARQUIS, Charles's Father.
THE BRIGADIER of Gendarmerie.
THE CURATE.
THE NOTARY.
A WAITER.
ERNESTINE, Goriot's Daughter.
ALINE.
MAIDS, PEASANTS (*Male and Female*), GENDARMES.

The Scene is laid in the Courtyard of the *Auberge des Adrets*, on the frontier of France and Savoy. The time 1820. The action occupies an interval of from twelve to fourteen hours: from four in the afternoon till about five in the morning.

NOTE — The time between the acts should be as brief as possible, and the piece played, where it is merely comic, in a vein of patter.

ACT I

The Stage represents the courtyard of the Auberge des Adrets. It is surrounded by the buildings of the inn, with a gallery on the first story, approached, C., by a straight flight of stairs. L. C., the entrance doorway. A little in front of this, a small grated office, containing business table, brass-bound cabinet, and portable cash-box. In front, R. and L., tables and benches; one, L., partially laid for a considerable party

SCENE I

ALINE *and* MAIDS; *to whom* FIDDLERS; *afterwards* DUMONT *and* CHARLES. *As the curtain rises, the sound of the violins is heard approaching.* ALINE *and the inn servants, who are discovered laying the table, dance up to door L. C., to meet the* FIDDLERS, *who enter likewise dancing to their own music. Air: "Haste to the Wedding." The* FIDDLERS *exeunt playing into house, R. U. E.* ALINE *and* MAIDS *dance back to table, which they proceed to arrange*

ALINE. Well, give me fiddles: fiddles and a wedding feast. It tickles your heart till your heels make a runaway match of it. I don't mind extra work, I don't, so long as there's fun about it. Hand me up that pile of plates. The quinces there, before the bride. Stick a pink in the Notary's glass: that's the girl he's courting.

DUMONT (*entering; with* CHARLES). Good girls, good

girls! Charles, in ten minutes from now what happy faces will smile around that board!

CHARLES. Sir, my good fortune is complete; and most of all in this, that my happiness has made my father happy.

DUMONT. Your father? Ah, well, upon that point we shall have more to say.

CHARLES. What more remains that has not been said already? For surely, sir, there are few sons more fortunate in their father: and, since you approve of this marriage, may I not conceive you to be in that sense fortunate in your son?

DUMONT. Dear boy, there is always a variety of considerations. But the moment is ill chosen for dispute; to-night, at least, let our felicity be unalloyed. (*Looking off L. C.*) Our guests arrive: here is our good Curate, and here our cheerful Notary.

CHARLES. His old infirmity, I fear.

DUMONT. But Charles — dear boy! — at your wedding feast! I should have taken it unneighbourly had he come strictly sober.

SCENE II

To these, by the door L. C., the CURATE *and the* NOTARY, *arm in arm; the latter owl-like and titubant*

CURATE. Peace be on this house!

NOTARY (*singing*). "Prove an excuse for the glass."

DUMONT. Welcome, excellent neighbours! The Church and the Law.

CURATE. And you, Charles, let me hope your feelings are in solemn congruence with this momentous step.

NOTARY. (*digging* CHARLES *in the ribs*). Married? Lovely bride? Prove an excuse!

DUMONT (*to* CURATE). I fear our friend? perhaps? as usual? eh?

CURATE. Possibly: I had not yet observed it.

DUMONT. Well, well, his heart is good.

CURATE. He doubtless meant it kindly.

NOTARY. Where's Aline?

ALINE. Coming, sir! (NOTARY *makes for her.*)

CURATE (*capturing him*). You will infallibly expose yourself to misconstruction. (*To* CHARLES.) Where is your commanding officer?

CHARLES. Why, sir, we have quite an alert. Information has been received from Lyons that the notorious malefactor, Robert Macaire, has broken prison, and the Brigadier is now scouring the country in his pursuit. I myself am instructed to watch the visitors to our house.

DUMONT. That will do, Charles: you may go. (*Exit* CHARLES.) You have considered the case I laid before you?

NOTARY. Considered a case?

DUMONT. Yes, yes. Charles, you know, Charles. Can he marry? under these untoward and peculiar circumstances, can he marry?

NOTARY. Now, lemme tell you: marriage is a contract to which there are two constracting parties. That being clear, I am prepared to argue categorically that your son Charles — who, it appears, is not your son Charles — I am prepared to argue that one party to a contract being null and void, the other party to a contract cannot by law oblige or constrain the first party to constract or

bind himself to any contract, except the other party be able to see his way clearly to constract himself with him. I donno if I make myself clear?

DUMONT. No.

NOTARY. Now, lemme tell you: by applying justice of peace might possibly afford relief.

DUMONT. But how?

NOTARY. Ay, there's the rub.

DUMONT. But what am I to do? He's not my son, I tell you: Charles is not my son.

NOTARY. I know.

DUMONT. Perhaps a glass of wine would clear him?

NOTARY. That's what I want. (*They go out, L. U. E.*)

ALINE. And now, if you've done deranging my table, to the cellar for the wine, the whole pack of you. (*Manet sola, considering table.*) There: it's like a garden. If I had as sweet a table for my wedding, I would marry the Notary.

SCENE III

The Stage remains vacant. Enter, by door L. C., MACAIRE, *followed by* BERTRAND *with the bundle; in the traditional costume*

MACAIRE. Good! No police.

BERTRAND (*looking off, L. C.*). Sold again!

MACAIRE. This is a favoured spot, Bertrand: ten minutes from the frontier: ten minutes from escape. Blessings on that frontier line! The criminal hops across, and lo! the reputable man. (*Reading*) "*Auberge des Adrets,* by John Paul Dumont." A table set

for company; this is fate: Bertrand, are we the first arrivals? An office; a cabinet; a cash-box — aha! and a cash-box, golden within. A money-box is like a Quaker beauty: demure without, but what a figure of a woman! Outside gallery: an architectural feature I approve; I count it a convenience both for love and war: the troubadour — twang-twang; the craftsman —— (*Makes as if turning key.*) The kitchen window: humming with cookery; truffles, before Jove! I was born for truffles. Cock your hat: meat, wine, rest, and occupation; men to gull, women to fool, and still the door open, the great unbolted door of the frontier!

BERTRAND. Macaire, I'm hungry.

MACAIRE. Bertrand, excuse me, you are a sensualist. I should have left you in the stone-yard at Lyons, and written no passport but my own. Your soul is incorporate with your stomach. Am I not hungry, too? My body, thanks to immortal Jupiter, is but the boy that holds the kite-string; my aspirations and designs swim like the kite sky-high, and overlook an empire.

BERTRAND. If I could get a full meal and a pound in my pocket I would hold my tongue.

MACAIRE. Dreams, dreams! We are what we are; and what are we? Who are you? who cares? Who am I? myself. What do we come from? an accident. What's a mother? an old woman. A father? the gentleman who beats her. What is crime? discovery. Virtue? opportunity. Politics? a pretext. Affection? an affectation. Morality? an affair of latitude. Punishment? this side the frontier. Reward? the other. Property? plunder. Business? other people's money

— not mine, by God! and the end of life to live till we are hanged.

BERTRAND. Macaire, I came into this place with my tail between my legs already, and hungry besides; and then you get to flourishing, and it depresses me worse than the chaplain in the jail.

MACAIRE. What is a chaplain? A man they pay to say what you don't want to hear.

BERTRAND. And who are you after all? and what right have you to talk like that? By what I can hear, you've been the best part of your life in quod; and as for me, since I've followed you, what sort of luck have I had? Sold again! A boose, a blue fright, two years' hard, and the police hot-foot after us even now.

MACAIRE. What is life? A boose and the police.

BERTRAND. Of course, I know you're clever; I admire you down to the ground, and I'll starve without you. But I can't stand it, and I'm off. Good-bye: good luck to you, old man! and if you want the bundle ——

MACAIRE. I am a gentleman of a mild disposition and, I thank my maker, elegant manners; but rather than be betrayed by such a thing as you are, with the courage of a hare, and the manners, by the Lord Harry, of a jumping-jack —— (*He shows his knife.*)

BERTRAND. Put it up, put it up: I'll do what you want.

MACAIRE. What is obedience? fear. So march straight, or look for mischief. It's not *bon ton*, I know, and far from friendly. But what is friendship? convenience. But we lose time in this amiable dalliance. Come, now, an effort of deportment: the head thrown back, a jaunty carriage of the leg; crook gracefully the elbow. Thus. 'Tis better. (*Calling.*) House, house here!

BERTRAND. Are you mad? We haven't a brass farthing.

MACAIRE. Now!—But before we leave!

SCENE IV

To these, DUMONT

DUMONT. Gentlemen, what can a plain man do for your service?

MACAIRE. My good man, in a roadside inn one cannot look for the impossible. Give one what small wine and what country fare you can produce.

DUMONT. Gentlemen, you come here upon a most auspicious day, a red-letter day for me and my poor house, when all are welcome. Suffer me, with all delicacy, to inquire if you are not in somewhat narrow circumstances?

MACAIRE. My good creature, you are strangely in error; one is rolling in gold.

BERTRAND. And very hungry.

DUMONT. Dear me, and on this happy occasion I had registered a vow that every poor traveller should have his keep for nothing, and a pound in his pocket to help him on his journey.

MACAIRE. A pound in his pocket?
BERTRAND. Keep for nothing?
MACAIRE. Bitten!
BERTRAND. Sold again!
Aside.

DUMONT. I will send you what we have: poor fare, perhaps, for gentlemen like you.

SCENE V

MACAIRE, BERTRAND; *afterwards* CHARLES, *who appears on the gallery, and comes down*

BERTRAND. I told you so. Why will you fly so high?

MACAIRE. Bertrand, don't crush me. A pound: a fortune! With a pound to start upon — two pounds, for I'd have borrowed yours — three months from now I might have been driving in my barouche, with you behind it, Bertrand, in a tasteful livery.

BERTRAND (*seeing* CHARLES). Lord, a policeman!

MACAIRE. Steady! What is a policeman? Justice's blind eye. (*To* CHARLES.) I think, sir, you are in the force?

CHARLES. I am, sir, and it was in that character——

MACAIRE. Ah, sir, a fine service!

CHARLES. It is, sir, and if your papers——

MACAIRE. You become your uniform. Have you a mother? Ah, well, well!

CHARLES. My duty, sir——

MACAIRE. They tell me one Macaire — is not that his name, Bertrand? — has broken jail at Lyons?

CHARLES. He has, sir, and it is precisely for that reason——

MACAIRE. Well, good-bye. (*Shaking* CHARLES *by the hand and leading him towards the door, L. U. E.*) Sweet spot, sweet spot. The scenery is . . . (*kisses his finger-tips. Exit* CHARLES). And now, what is a policeman?

BERTRAND. A bobby.

SCENE VI

MACAIRE, BERTRAND; *to whom* ALINE *with tray; and afterwards* MAIDS

ALINE (*entering with tray, and proceeding to lay table, L.*) My men, you are in better luck than usual. It isn't every day you go shares in a wedding feast.

MACAIRE. A wedding? Ah, and you're the bride.

ALINE. What makes you fancy that?

MACAIRE. Heavens, am I blind?

ALINE. Well, then, I wish I was.

MACAIRE. I take you at the word: have me.

ALINE. You will never be hanged for modesty.

MACAIRE. Modesty is for the poor: when one is rich and nobly born, 'tis but a clog. I love you. What is your name?

ALINE. Guess again, and you'll guess wrong. (*Enter the other servants with wine baskets.*) Here, set the wine down. No, that is the old Burgundy for the wedding party. These gentlemen must put up with a different bin. (*Setting wine before* MACAIRE *and* BERTRAND, *who are at table, L.*)

MACAIRE (*drinking*). Vinegar, by the supreme Jove!

BERTRAND. Sold again!

MACAIRE. Now, Bertrand, mark me. (*Before the servants he exchanges the bottle for the one in front of* DUMONT'S *place at the head of the other table.*) Was it well done?

BERTRAND. Immense.

MACAIRE (*emptying his glass into* BERTRAND'S). There, Bertrand, you may finish that. Ha! music?

SCENE VII

To these, from the inn, L. U. E., DUMONT, CHARLES, *the* CURATE, *the* NOTARY *jigging: from the inn, R. U. E.,* FIDDLERS *playing and dancing; and through door L. C.,* GORIOT, ERNESTINE, PEASANTS, *dancing likewise. Air: "Haste to the Wedding." As the parties meet, the music ceases.*

DUMONT. Welcome, neighbours! welcome friends! Ernestine, here is my Charles, no longer mine. A thousand welcomes. O the gay day! O the auspicious wedding! (CHARLES, ERNESTINE, DUMONT, GORIOT, CURATE, *and* NOTARY *sit to the wedding feast;* PEASANTS, FIDDLERS, *and* MAIDS, *grouped at back, drinking from the barrel.*) O, I must have all happy around me.

GORIOT. Then help the soup.

DUMONT. Give me leave: I must have all happy. Shall these poor gentlemen upon a day like this drink ordinary wine? Not so: I shall drink it. (*To* MACAIRE, *who is just about to fill his glass.*) Don't touch it, sir! Aline, give me that gentleman's bottle and take him mine: with old Dumont's compliments.

MACAIRE. What?

BERTRAND. Change the bottle?

MACAIRE. Bitten! } *Aside.*

BERTRAND. Sold again. }

DUMONT. Yes, all shall be happy.

GORIOT. I tell 'ee, help the soup!

DUMONT (*begins to help soup. Then, dropping ladle*). One word: a matter of detail: Charles is not my son.

(*All exclaim.*) O no, he is not my son. Perhaps I should have mentioned it before.

CHARLES. I am not your son, sir?

DUMONT. O no, far from it.

GORIOT. Then who the devil's son be he?

DUMONT. O, I don't know. It's an odd tale, a romantic tale: it may amuse you. It was twenty years ago, when I kept the *Golden Head* at Lyons: Charles was left upon my doorstep in a covered basket, with sufficient money to support the child till he should come of age. There was no mark upon the linen, nor any clue but one: an unsigned letter from the father of the child, which he strictly charged me to preserve. It was to prove his identity: he, of course, would know the contents, and he only; so I keep it safe in the third compartment of my cash-box, with the ten thousand francs I've saved for his dowry. Here is the key; it's a patent key. To-day the poor boy is twenty-one, to-morrow to be married. I did perhaps hope the father would appear: there was a Marquis coming; he wrote me for a room; I gave him the best, Number Thirteen, which you have all heard of: I did hope it might be he, for a Marquis, you know, is always genteel. But no, you see. As for me, I take you all to witness I'm as innocent of him as the babe unborn.

MACAIRE. Ahem! I think you said the linen bore an M?

DUMONT. Pardon me: the markings were cut off.

MACAIRE. True. The basket white, I think?

DUMONT. Brown, brown.

MACAIRE. Ah! brown — a whitey-brown.

GORIOT. I tell 'ee what, Dumont, this is all very well;

but in that case, I'll be danged if he gets my daater. (*General consteration.*)

DUMONT. O Goriot, let's have happy faces!

GORIOT. Happy faces be danged! I want to marry my daater; I want your son. But who be this? I don't know, and you don't know, and he don't know. He may be anybody; by Jarge, he may be nobody! (*Exclamations.*)

CURATE. The situation is crepuscular.

ERNESTINE. Father, and Mr. Dumont (and you too, Charles), I wish to say one word. You gave us leave to fall in love; we fell in love; and as for me, my father, I will either marry Charles, or die a maid.

CHARLES. And you, sir, would you rob me in one day of both a father and a wife?

DUMONT (*weeping*). Happy faces, happy faces!

GORIOT. I know nothing about robbery; but she cannot marry without my consent, and that she cannot get.

DUMONT. O dear, O dear!
ALINE. What, spoil the wedding?
ERNESTINE. O father!
CHARLES. Sir, sir, you would not ——
Together.

GORIOT (*exasperated*). I wun't, and what's more I shan't.

NOTARY. I donno if I make myself clear?

DUMONT. Goriot, do let's have happy faces!

GORIOT. Fudge! Fudge!! Fudge!!!

CURATE. Possibly on application to this conscientious jurist, light may be obtained.

ALL. The Notary; yes, yes; the Notary!

DUMONT. Now, how about this marriage?

NOTARY. Marriage is a contract, to which there are

two constracting parties, John Doe and Richard Roe. I donno if I make myself clear?

ALINE. Poor lamb!

CURATE. Silence, my friend; you will expose yourself to misconstruction.

MACAIRE (*taking the stage*). As an entire stranger in this painful scene, will you permit a gentleman and a traveller to interject one word? There sits the young man, full, I am sure, of pleasing qualities; here the young maiden, by her own confession bashfully consenting to the match; there sits that dear old gentleman, a lover of bright faces like myself, his own now dimmed with sorrow; and here — (may I be allowed to add?) — here sits this noble Roman, a father like myself, and like myself the slave of duty. Last you have me — Baron Henri-Frédéric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest, the man of the world and the man of delicacy. I find you all — permit me the expression — gravelled. A marriage and an obstacle. Now, what is marriage? The union of two souls, and, what is possibly more romantic, the fusion of two dowries. What is an obstacle? the devil. And this obstacle? to me, as a man of family, the obstacle seems grave; but to me, as a man and a brother, what is it but a word? O my friend (*to* GORIOT), you whom I single out as the victim of the same noble failings with myself — of pride of birth, of pride of honesty — O my friend, reflect. Go now apart with your dishevelled daughter, your tearful son-in-law, and let their plaints constrain you. Believe me, when you come to die, you will recall with pride this amiable weakness.

GORIOT. I shan't, and what's more I wun't. (CHARLES

and ERNESTINE *lead him up stage, protesting. All rise, except* NOTARY.)

DUMONT (*front R., shaking hands with* MACAIRE). Sir, you have a noble nature. (MACAIRE *picks his pocket.*) Dear me, dear me, and you are rich.

MACAIRE. I own, sir, I deceived you: I feared some wounding offer, and my pride replied. But to be quite frank with you, you behold me here, the Baron Henri-Frédéric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest, and between my simple manhood and the infinite these rags are all.

DUMONT. Dear me, and with this noble pride, my gratitude is useless. For I, too, have delicacy: I understand you could not stoop to take a gift.

MACAIRE. A gift? a small one? never!

DUMONT. And I will never wound you by the offer.

MACAIRE. Bitten.
BERTRAND. Sold again. } *Aside.*

GORIOT (*taking the stage*). But, look'ee here, he can't marry.

MACAIRE. Hey?
DUMONT. Ah!
ALINE. Heyday!
CURATE. Wherefore?
ERNESTINE. Oh!
CHARLES. Ah! } *Together.*

GORIOT. Not without his veyther's consent! And he hasn't got it; and what's more, he can't get it: and what's more, he hasn't got a veyther to get it from. It's the law of France.

ALINE. Then the law of France ought to be ashamed of itself.

ERNESTINE. O, couldn't we ask the Notary again?

CURATE. Indubitably you may ask him.

MACAIRE. Can't they marry?
DUMONT. Can't he marry?
ALINE. Can't she marry?
ERNESTINE. Can't we marry?
CHARLES. Can't I marry?
GORIOT. Bain't I right?
Together.

NOTARY. Constracting parties.

CURATE. Possibly to-morrow at an early hour he may be more perspicuous.

GORIOT. Ay, before he've time to get at it.

NOTARY. Unoffending jurisconsult overtaken by sorrow. Possibly by applying justice of peace might afford relief.

MACAIRE. Bravo!
DUMONT. Excellent!
CHARLES. Let's go at once!
ALINE. The very thing!
ERNESTINE. Yes, this minute!
Together.

GORIOT. I'll go. I don't mind getting advice, but I wun't take it.

MACAIRE. My friends, one word: I perceive by your downcast looks that you have not recognised the true nature of your responsibility as citizens of time. What is care? impiety. Joy? the whole duty of man. Here is an opportunity of duty it were sinful to forego. With a word, I could lighten your hearts; but I prefer to quicken your heels, and send you forth on your ingenuous errand with happy faces and smiling thoughts, the physicians of your own recovery. Fiddlers, to your catgut! Up, Bertrand, and show them how one foots

it in society; forward, girls, and choose me every one the lad she loves; Dumont, benign old man, lead forth our blushing Curate; and you, O bride, embrace the uniform of your beloved, and help us dance in your wedding-day. (*Dance, in the course of which* MACAIRE *picks* DUMONT'S *pocket of his keys, selects the key of the cash-box, and returns the others to his pocket. In the end, all dance out: the wedding-party, headed by* FIDDLERS, *L. C.; the* MAIDS *and* ALINE *into the inn, R. U. E. Manet* BERTRAND *and* MACAIRE.)

SCENE VIII

MACAIRE, BERTRAND, *who instantly takes a bottle from the wedding-table, and sits with it, L.*

MACAIRE. Bertrand, there's a devil of a want of a father here.

BERTRAND. Ay, if we only knew where to find him.

MACAIRE. Bertrand, look at me: I am Macaire; I am that father.

BERTRAND. You, Macaire? you a father?

MACAIRE. Not yet, but in five minutes. I am capable of anything. (*Producing key.*) What think you of this?

BERTRAND. That? Is it a key?

MACAIRE. Ay, boy, and what besides? my diploma of respectability, my patent of fatherhood. I prigged it—in the ardour of the dance I prigged it; I change it beyond recognition, thus (*twists the handle of the key*); and now . . . ? Where is my long-lost child? produce my young policeman! show me my gallant boy!

BERTRAND. I don't understand.

MACAIRE. Dear innocence, how should you? Your

brains are in your fists. Go and keep watch. (*He goes into the office and returns with the cash-box.*) Keep watch, I say.

BERTRAND. Where?

MACAIRE. Everywhere. (*He opens box.*)

BERTRAND. Gold.

MACAIRE. Hands off! Keep watch. (BERTRAND *at back of stage.*) Beat slower, my paternal heart! The third compartment; let me see.

BERTRAND. S'st! (MACAIRE *shuts box.*) No; false alarm.

MACAIRE. The third compartment. Ay, here t——

BERTRAND. S'st! (*Same business.*) No: fire away.

MACAIRE. The third compartment: it must be this.

BERTRAND. S'st! (MACAIRE *keeps box open, watching* BERTRAND.) All serene; it's the wind.

MACAIRE. Now, see here! (*He darts his knife into the stage.*) I will either be backed as a man should be, or from this minute out I'll work alone. Do you understand? I said alone.

BERTRAND. For the Lord's sake, Macaire!——

MACAIRE. Ay, here it is. (*Reading letter.*) "Preserve this letter secretly; its terms are known only to you and me: hence when the time comes, I shall repeat them, and my son will recognise his father." Signed: "Your Unknown Benefactor." (*He hums it over twice and replaces it. Then, fingering the gold.*) Gold! The yellow enchantress, happiness ready-made and laughing in my face! Gold: what is gold? The world; the term of ills; the empery of all; the multitudinous babble of the change, the sailing from all ports of freighted argosies; music, wine, a palace; the doors

of the bright theatre, the key of consciences, and love — love's whistle! All this below my itching fingers; and to set this by, turn a deaf ear upon the siren present, and condescend once more, naked, into the ring with fortune — Macaire, how few would do it! But you, Macaire, you are compacted of more subtile clay. No cheap immediate pilfering: no retail trade of petty larceny; but swoop at the heart of the position, and clutch all!

BERTRAND (*at his shoulder*). Halves!

MACAIRE. Halves? (*He locks the box.*) Bertrand, I am a father. (*Replaces box in office.*)

BERTRAND (*looking after him*). Well, I — am — damned!

DROP

ACT II

When the curtain rises, the night has come. A hanging cluster of lighted lamps over each table, R. and L. MACAIRE, *R., smoking a cigarette;* BERTRAND, *L., with a churchwarden: each with bottle and glass*

SCENE I

MACAIRE, BERTRAND

MACAIRE. Bertrand, I am content: a child might play with me. Does your pipe draw well?

BERTRAND. Like a factory chimney. This is my notion of life: liquor, a chair, a table to put my feet on, a fine clean pipe, and no police.

MACAIRE. Bertrand, do you see these changing exhalations? do you see these blue rings and spirals, weaving their dance, like a round of fairies, on the footless air?

BERTRAND. I see 'em right enough.

MACAIRE. Man of little vision, expound me these meteors! what do they signify, O wooden-head? Clod, of what do they consist?

BERTRAND. Damned bad tobacco.

MACAIRE. I will give you a little course of science. Everything, Bertrand (much as it may surprise you), has three states: a vapour, a liquid, a solid. These are fortune in the vapour: these are ideas. What are ideas? the protaplasm of wealth. To your head — which, by the way, is a solid, Bertrand — what are they but foul air? To mine, to my prehensile and constructive intel-

lects, see, as I grasp and work them, to what lineaments of the future they transform themselves: a palace, a barouche, a pair of luminous footmen, plate, wine, respect, and to be honest!

BERTRAND. But what's the sense in honesty?

MACAIRE. The sense? You see me: Macaire: elegant, immoral, invincible in cunning; well, Bertrand, much as it may surprise you, I am simply damned by my dishonesty.

BERTRAND. No!

MACAIRE. The honest man, Bertrand, that God's noblest work. He carries the bag, my boy. Would you have me define honesty? the strategic point for theft. Bertrand, if I'd three hundred a year, I'd be honest tomorrow.

BERTRAND. Ah! Don't you wish you may get it!

MACAIRE. Bertrand, I will bet you my head against your own — the longest odds I can imagine — that with honesty for my spring-board, I leap through history like a paper hoop, and come out among posterity heroic and immortal.

SCENE II

To these, all the former characters, less the NOTARY. *The fiddles are heard without, playing dolefully. Air: "O dear, what can the matter be?" in time to which the procession enters.*

MACAIRE. Well, friends, what cheer?

ALINE. No wedding, no wedding!
GORIOT. I told 'ee he can't and he can't.
DUMONT. Dear, dear me!
ERNESTINE. They won't let us marry.
CHARLES. No wife, no father, no nothing!

Together.

CURATE. The facts have justified the worst anticipations of our absent friend, the Notary.

MACAIRE. I perceive I must reveal myself.

DUMONT. God bless me, no!

MACAIRE. My friends, I had meant to preserve a strict incognito, for I was ashamed (I own it!) of this poor accoutrement; but when I see a face that I can render happy, say, my old Dumont, should I hesitate to work the change? Hear me, then, and you (*to the others*) prepare a smiling countenance. (*Repeating.*) "Preserve this letter secretly; its terms are only known to you and me; hence when the time comes, I shall repeat them, and my son will recognise his father. — Your Unknown Benefactor."

DUMONT. The words! the letter! Charles, alas! it is your father!

CHARLES. Good Lord! (*General consternation.*)

BERTRAND (*aside: smiting his brow*). I see it now; sublime!

CURATE. A highly singular eventuality.

GORIOT. Him? O well, then, I wun't. (*Goes up.*)

MACAIRE. Charles, to my arms! (*Business.*) Ernestine, your second father waits to welcome you. (*Business.*) Goriot, noble old man, I grasp your hand. (*He doesn't.*) And you, Dumont, how shall your unknown benefactor thank you for your kindness to his boy? (*A dead pause.*) Charles, to my arms!

CHARLES. My father, you are still something of a stranger. I hope — er — in the course of time — I hope that may be somewhat mended. But I confess that I have so long regarded Mr. Dumont ——

MACAIRE. Love him still, dear boy, love him still. I

have not returned to be a burden on your heart, nor much, comparatively, on your pocket. A place by the fire, dear boy, a crust for my friend, Bertrand. (*A dead pause.*) Ah, well, this is a different home-coming from that I fancied when I left the letter: I dreamed to grow rich. Charles, you remind me of your sainted mother.

CHARLES. I trust, sir, you do not think yourself less welcome for your poverty.

MACAIRE. Nay, nay — more welcome, more welcome. O, I know your — (*business*) backs! Besides, my poverty is noble. Political . . . Dumont, what are your politics?

DUMONT. A plain old republican, my lord.

MACAIRE. And yours, my good Goriot?

GORIOT. I be a royalist, I be, and so be my daater.

MACAIRE. How strange is the coincidence! The party that I sought to found combined the peculiarities of both: a patriotic enterprise in which I fell. This humble fellow . . . have I introduced him? You behold in us the embodiment of aristocracy and democracy. Bertrand, shake hands with my family. (BERTRAND *is rebuffed by one and the other in dead silence.*)

BERTRAND. Sold again!

MACAIRE. Charles, to my arms! (*Business.*)

ERNESTINE. Well, but now that he has a father of some kind, cannot the marriage go on?

MACAIRE. Angel, this very night: I burn to take my grandchild on my knees.

GORIOT. Be you that young man's veyther?

MACAIRE. Ay, and what a father!

GORIOT. Then all I've got to say is, I shan't and I wun't.

MACAIRE. Ah, friends, friends, what a satisfaction it is, what a sight is virtue! I came among you in this poor attire to test you; how nobly have you borne the test! But my disguise begins to irk me: who will lend me a good suit? (*Business.*)

SCENE III

To these, the MARQUIS, *L. C.*

MARQUIS. Is this the house of John Paul Dumont, once of Lyons?

DUMONT. It is, sir, and I am he, at your disposal.

MARQUIS. I am the Marquis Villers-Cotterêts de la Cherté de Médoc. (*Sensation.*)

MACAIRE. Marquis, delighted, I am sure.

MARQUIS (*to* DUMONT). I come, as you perceive, unfollowed; my errand, therefore, is discreet. I come (*producing notes from breast-pocket*) equipped with thirty thousand francs; my errand, therefore, must be generous. Can you not guess?

DUMONT. Not I, my lord.

MARQUIS (*repeating*). "Preserve this letter," *etc.*

MACAIRE. Bitten.

BERTRAND. Sold again (*aside*). (*A pause.*)

ALINE. Well, I never did!

DUMONT. Two fathers!

MARQUIS. Two? Impossible.

DUMONT. Not at all. This is the other.

MARQUIS. This man?

MACAIRE. This is the man, my lord; here stands the father; Charles, to my arms! (CHARLES *backs.*)

DUMONT. He knew the letter.

MARQUIS. Well, but so did I.

CURATE. The judgment of Solomon.

GORIOT. What did I tell 'ee? he can't marry.

ERNESTINE. Couldn't they both consent?

MARQUIS. But he's my living image.

MACAIRE. Mine, Marquis, mine.

MARQUIS. My figure, I think?

MACAIRE. Ah, Charles, Charles!

CURATE. We used to think his physiognomy resembled Dumont's.

DUMONT. Come to look at him, he's really like Goriot.

ERNESTINE. O papa, I hope he's not my brother.

GORIOT. What be talking of? I tell 'ee, he's like our Curate.

CHARLES. Gentlemen, my head aches.

MARQUIS. I have it: the involuntary voice of nature. Look at me, my son.

MACAIRE. Nay, Charles, but look at me.

CHARLES. Gentlemen, I am unconscious of the smallest natural inclination for either.

MARQUIS. Another thought: what was his mother's name?

MACAIRE. What was the name of his mother by you?

MARQUIS. Sir, you are silenced.

MACAIRE. Silenced by honour. I had rather lose my boy than compromise his sainted mother.

MARQUIS. A thought: twins might explain it: had you not two foundlings?

DUMONT. Nay, sir, one only; and judging by the miseries of this evening, I should say, thank God!

MACAIRE. My friends, leave me alone with the Marquis. It is only a father that can understand a father's

heart. Bertrand, follow the members of my family. (*They troop out, L. U. E. and R. U. E., the fiddlers playing. Air: "O dear, what can the matter be?"*)

SCENE IV

MACAIRE, MARQUIS

MARQUIS. Well, sir?

MACAIRE. My lord, I feel for you. (*Business. They sit, R.*)

MARQUIS. And now, sir?

MACAIRE. The bond that joins us is remarkable and touching.

MARQUIS. Well, sir?

MACAIRE (*touching him on the breast*). You have there thirty thousand francs.

MARQUIS. Well, sir?

MACAIRE. I was but thinking of the inequalities of life, my lord: that I who, for all you know, may be the father of your son, should have nothing; and that you who, for all I know, may be the father of mine, should be literally bulging with bank notes. . . . Where do you keep them at night?

MARQUIS. Under my pillow. I think it rather ingenious.

MACAIRE. Admirably so! I applaud the device.

MARQUIS. Well, sir?

MACAIRE. Do you snuff, my lord?

MARQUIS. No, sir, I do not.

MACAIRE. My lord, I am a poor man.

MARQUIS. Well, sir? and what of that?

MACAIRE. The affections, my lord, are priceless.

Money will not buy them ; or, at least, it takes a great deal.

MARQUIS. Sir, your sentiments do you honour.

MACAIRE. My lord, you are rich.

MARQUIS. Well, sir ?

MACAIRE. Now follow me, I beseech you. Here am I, my lord ; and there, if I may so express myself, are you. Each has the father's heart, and there we are equal; each claims yon interesting lad, and there again we are on a par. But, my lord — and here we come to the inequality, and what I consider the unfairness of the thing — you have thirty thousand francs, and I, my lord, have not a rap. You mark me ? not a rap, my lord ! My lord, put yourself in my position: consider what must be my feelings, my desires; and — hey ?

MARQUIS. I fail to grasp. . . .

MACAIRE (*with irritation*). My dear man, there is the door of the house; here am I; there (*touching* MARQUIS *on the breast*) are thirty thousand francs. Well, now ?

MARQUIS. I give you my word of honour, sir, I gather nothing; my mind is quite unused to such prolonged exertion. If the boy be yours, he is not mine; if he be mine, he is not yours; and if he is neither of ours, or both of ours . . . in short, my mind. . . .

MACAIRE. My lord, will you lay those thirty thousand francs upon the table ?

MARQUIS. I fail to grasp . . . but if it will in any way oblige you. . . . (*Does so.*)

MACAIRE. Now, my lord, follow me: I take them up; you see ? I put them in my pocket; you follow me ? This is my hat; here is my stick; and here is my — my friend's bundle.

MARQUIS. But that is my cloak.

MACAIRE. Precisely. Now, my lord, one more effort of your lordship's mind. If I were to go out of that door, with the full intention — follow me close — the full intention of never being heard of more, what would you do?

MARQUIS. I! — send for the police.

MACAIRE. Take your money! (*Dashing down the notes.*) Man, if I met you in a lane! (*He drops his head upon the table.*)

MARQUIS. The poor soul is insane. The other man whom I suppose to be his keeper, is very much to blame.

MACAIRE (*raising his head*). I have a light! (*To* MARQUIS.) With invincible oafishness, my lord, I cannot struggle. I pass you by; I leave you gaping by the wayside; I blush to have a share in the progeny of such an owl. Off, off, and send the tapster!

MARQUIS. Poor fellow.

SCENE V

MACAIRE, *to whom* BERTRAND. *Afterwards* DUMONT

BERTRAND. Well?

MACAIRE. Bitten.

BERTRAND. Sold again.

MACAIRE. Had he the wit of a lucifer match! But what can gods or men against stupidity? Still, I have a trick. Where is that damned old man?

DUMONT (*entering*). I hear you want me.

MACAIRE. Ah, my good old Dumont, this is very sad.

DUMONT. Dear me, what is wrong?

MACAIRE. Dumont, you had a dowry for my son?

DUMONT. I had; I have: ten thousand francs.

MACAIRE. It's a poor thing, but it must do. Dumont, I bury my old hopes, my old paternal tenderness.

DUMONT. What? is he not your son?

MACAIRE. Pardon me, my friend. The Marquis claims my boy. I will not seek to deny that he attempted to corrupt me, or that I spurned his gold. It was thirty thousand.

DUMONT. Noble soul!

MACAIRE. One has a heart . . . He spoke, Dumont, that proud noble spoke, of the advantages to our beloved Charles; and in my father's heart a voice arose, louder than thunder. Dumont, was I unselfish? The voice said no; the voice, Dumont, up and told me to begone.

DUMONT. To begone? to go?

MACAIRE. To begone, Dumont, and to go. Both, Dumont. To leave my son to marry, and be rich and happy as the son of another; to creep forth myself, old, penniless, broken-hearted, exposed to the inclemencies of heaven and the rebuffs of the police.

DUMONT. This is what I had looked for at your hands. Noble, noble man!

MACAIRE. One has a heart . . . and yet, Dumont, it can hardly have escaped your penetration that if I were to shift from this hostelry without a farthing, and leave my offspring to wallow—literally—among millions, I should play the part of little better than an ass.

DUMONT. But I had thought . . . I had fancied . . .

MACAIRE. No, Dumont, you had not; do not seek to impose upon my simplicity. What you did think was

this, Dumont: for the sake of this noble father, for the sake of this son whom he denies for his own interest — I mean, for his interest — no, I mean, for his own — well, anyway, in order to keep up the general atmosphere of sacrifice and nobility, I must hand over this dowry to the Baron Henri-Frédéric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest.

DUMONT. Noble, O noble!
BERTRAND. Beautiful, O beautiful!
Together: each shaking him by the hand.

DUMONT. Now Charles is rich he needs it not. For whom could it more fittingly be set aside than for his noble father? I will give it you at once.

BERTRAND. At once, at once!

MACAIRE (*aside to* BERTRAND). Hang on. (*Aloud.*) Charles, Charles, my lost boy! (*He falls weeping at L. table.* DUMONT *enters the office, and brings down cash-box to table R. He feels in all his pockets:* BERTRAND *from behind him making signs to* MACAIRE, *which the latter does not see.*)

DUMONT. That's strange. I can't find the key. It's a patent key.

BERTRAND (*behind* DUMONT, *making signs to* MACAIRE.) The key, he can't find the key.

MACAIRE. O yes, I remember. I heard it drop. (*Drops key.*) And here it is before my eyes.

DUMONT. That? That's yours. I saw it drop.

MACAIRE. I give you my word of honour I heard it fall five minutes back.

DUMONT. But I saw it.

MACAIRE. Impossible. It must be yours.

DUMONT. It is like mine, indeed. How came it in your pocket.

MACAIRE. Bitten. (*Aside.*)

BERTRAND. Sold again (*aside*). . . . You forget, Baron, it's the key of my valise; I gave it you to keep in consequence of the hole in my pocket.

MACAIRE. True, true; and that explains.

DUMONT. O, that explains. Now, all we have to do is to find mine. It's a patent key. You heard it drop.

MACAIRE. Distinctly.

BERTRAND. So I did; distinctly.

DUMONT. Here, Aline, Babette, Goriot, Curate, Charles, everybody, come here and look for my key!

SCENE VI

To these with candles, all the former characters except FIDDLERS, PEASANTS, *and* NOTARY. *They hunt for the key*

DUMONT. It's bound to be here. We all heard it drop.

MARQUIS (*with* BERTRAND'S *bundle*). Is this it?

ALL (*with fury*). No.

BERTRAND. Hands off, that's my luggage. (*Hunt resumed.*)

DUMONT. I heard it drop, as plain as ever I heard anything.

MARQUIS. By the way (*all start up*), what are we looking for?

ALL (*with fury*). Oh!!

DUMONT. Will you have the kindness to find my key? (*Hunt resumed.*)

CURATE. What description of a key ——

DUMONT. A patent, patent, patent, patent key!

MACAIRE. I have it. Here it is!

ALL (*with relief*). Ah!!

DUMONT. That? What do you mean? That's yours.

MACAIRE. Pardon me.

DUMONT. It is.

MACAIRE. It isn't.

DUMONT. I tell you it is: look at that twisted handle.

MACAIRE. It can't be mine, and so it must be yours.

DUMONT. It is NOT. Feel in your pockets. (*To the others.*) Will you have the kindness to find my patent key?

ALL. Oh!! (*Hunt resumed.*)

MACAIRE. Ah, well, you're right. (*He slips key into* DUMONT'S *pocket.*) An idea: suppose you felt in your pocket?

ALL (*rising*). Yes! Suppose you did!

DUMONT. I will not feel in my pockets. How could it be there? It's a patent key. This is more than any man can bear. First, Charles is one man's son, and then he's another's, and then he's nobody's, and be damned to him! And then there's my key lost; and then there's your key! What is your key? Where is your key? Where isn't it? And why is it like mine, only mine's a patent? The long and short of it is this: that I'm going to bed, and that you're all going to bed, and that I refuse to hear another word upon the subject or upon any subject. There!

MACAIRE. Bitten.
BERTRAND. Sold again. } *Aside.*

(ALINE *and* MAIDS *extinguish hanging lamps over tables, R. and L. Stage lighted only by guests' candles.*)

CHARLES. But, sir, I cannot decently retire to rest till I embrace my honoured parent. Which is it to be?

MACAIRE. Charles, to my ——

DUMONT. Embrace neither of them; embrace nobody; there has been too much of this sickening folly. To bed!!! (*Exit violently R. U. E. All the characters troop slowly upstairs, talking in dumb show.* BERTRAND *and* MACAIRE *remain in front C., watching them go.*)

BERTRAND. Sold again, captain?

MACAIRE. Ay, they will have it.

BERTRAND. It? What?

MACAIRE. The worst, Bertrand. What is man? — a beast of prey. An hour ago, and I'd have taken a crust, and gone in peace. But no: they would trick and juggle, curse them; they would wriggle and cheat! Well, I accept the challenge: war to the knife.

BERTRAND. Murder?

MACAIRE. What is murder? A legal term for a man dying. Call it Fate, and that's philosophy; call me Providence, and you talk religion. Die? Why, that is what man is made for; we are full of mortal parts; we are all as good as dead already, we hang so close upon the brink: touch a button, and the strongest falls in dissolution. Now, see how easy: I take you —— (*grappling him*).

BERTRAND. Macaire — O no!

MACAIRE. Fool! would I harm a fly, when I had nothing to gain? As the butcher with the sheep, I kill to live; and where is the difference between man and mutton? pride and a tailor's bill. Murder? I know

who made that name — a man crouching from the knife! Selfishness made it — the aggregated egotism called society; but I meet that with a selfishness as great. Has he money? Have I none — great powers, none? Well, then, I fatten and manure my life with his.

BERTRAND. You frighten me. Who is it?

MACAIRE. Mark well. (*The* MARQUIS *opens the door of Number Thirteen, and the rest, clustering round, bid him good-night. As they begin to disperse along the gallery he enters and shuts the door.*) Out, out, brief candle! That man is doomed.

DROP

ACT III

SCENE I

MACAIRE, BERTRAND

As the curtain rises, the stage is dark and empty. Enter MACAIRE, *L. U. E., with lantern. He looks about.*

MACAIRE (*calling off*). S'st!

BERTRAND (*entering L. U. E.*). It's creeping dark.

MACAIRE. Blinding dark; and a good job.

BERTRAND. Macaire, I'm cold; my very hair's cold.

MACAIRE. Work, work will warm you: to your keys.

BERTRAND. No, Macaire, it's a horror. You'll not kill him; let's have no bloodshed.

MACAIRE. None: it spoils your clothes. Now, see: you have keys and you have experience; up that stair, and pick me the lock of that man's door. Pick me the lock of that man's door.

BERTRAND. May I take the light?

MACAIRE. You may not. Go. (BERTRAND *mounts the stairs, and is seen picking the lock of Number Thirteen.*) The earth spins eastward, and the day is at the door. Yet half an hour of covert, and the sun will be afoot, the discoverer, the great policeman. Yet, half an hour of night, the good, hiding, practicable night; and lo! at a touch the gas-jet of the universe turned on; and

up with the sun gets the providence of honest people, puts off his night-cap, throws up his window, stares out of house — and the rogue must skulk again till dusk. Yet half an hour and, Macaire, you shall be safe and rich. If yon fool — my fool — would but miscarry, if the dolt within would hear and leap upon him, I could intervene, kill both, by heaven — both! — cry murder with the best, and at one stroke reap honour and gold. For, Bertrand dead ——

BERTRAND (*from above*). S'st, Macaire!

MACAIRE. Is it done, dear boy? Come down. (BERTRAND *descends.*) Sit down beside this light: this is your ring of safety, budge not beyond — the night is crowded with hobgoblins. See ghosts and tremble like a jelly if you must; but remember men are my concern; and at the creak of a man's foot, hist! (*Sharpening his knife upon his sleeve.*) What is a knife? A plain man's sword.

BERTRAND. Not the knife, Macaire; O, not the knife!

MACAIRE. My name is Self-Defence. (*He goes upstairs and enters Number Thirteen.*)

BERTRAND. He's in. I hear a board creak. What a night, what a night! Will he hear him? O Lord, my poor Macaire! I hear nothing, nothing. The night's as empty as a dream: he must hear him; he cannot help but hear him; and then — O Macaire, Macaire, come back to me. It's death, and it's death, and it's death. Red, red: a corpse. Macaire to kill, Macaire to die? I'd rather starve, I'd rather perish, than either: I'm not fit, I'm not fit, for either! Why, how's this? I want to cry. (*A stroke, and a groan, from above.*) God Almighty, one of them's gone!

(*He falls with his head on table, R.* MACAIRE *appears at the top of the stairs, descends, comes airily forward and touches him on the shoulder.* BERTRAND, *with a cry, turns and falls upon his neck.*) O, O, and I thought I had lost him. (*Day breaking.*)

MACAIRE. The contrary, dear boy. (*He produces notes.*)

BERTRAND. What was it like?

MACAIRE. Like? Nothing. A little blood, a dead man.

BERTRAND. Blood! . . . (Dead! *He falls at table sobbing.* MACAIRE *divides the notes into two parts; on the smaller he wipes the bloody knife, and folding the stains inward, thrusts the notes into* BERTRAND'S *face.*)

MACAIRE. What is life without the pleasures of the table!

BERTRAND (*taking and pocketing notes*). Macaire, I can't get over it.

MACAIRE. My mark is the frontier, and at top speed. Don't hang your jaw at me. Up, up, at the double; pick me that cash-box; and let's get the damned house airly cleared.

BERTRAND. I can't. Did he bleed much?

MACAIRE. Bleed? Must I bleed you? To work, or I'm dangerous.

BERTRAND. It's all right, Macaire; I'm going.

MACAIRE. Better so: an old friend is nearly sacred. (*Full daylight: lights up.* MACAIRE *blows out lantern.*)

BERTRAND. Where's the key?

MACAIRE. Key? I tell you to pick it.

BERTRAND (*with the box*). But it's a patent lock. Where is the key? You had it.

MACAIRE. Will you pick that lock?

BERTRAND. I can't: it's a patent. Where's the key?

MACAIRE. If you will have it, I put it back in that old ass's pocket.

BERTRAND. Bitten, I think. (MACAIRE *dancing mad.*)

SCENE II

To these, DUMONT

DUMONT. Ah, friends, up so early? Catching the worm, catching the worm?

MACAIRE. Good-morning, good-morning!
BERTRAND. Early birds, early birds.
Both sitting on the table and dissembling box.

DUMONT. By the way, very remarkable thing: I found that key.

MACAIRE. No!

BERTRAND. O!

DUMONT. Perhaps a still more remarkable thing: it was my key that had the twisted handle.

MACAIRE. I told you so.

DUMONT. Now, what we have to do is to get the cash-box. Hallo! what's that your sitting on?

BERTRAND. Nothing.

MACAIRE. The table! I beg your pardon.

DUMONT. Why, it's my cash-box!

MACAIRE. Why, so it is!

DUMONT. It's very singular.

MACAIRE. Diabolishly singular.

BERTRAND. Early worms, early worms!

DUMONT (*blowing in key*). Well, I suppose you are still willing to begone?

MACAIRE. More than willing, my dear soul: pressed,

I may say, for time; for though it had quite escaped my memory, I have an appointment in Turin with a lady of title.

DUMONT (*at box*). It's very odd. (*Blows in key.*) it's a singular thing (*blowing*), key won't turn. It's a patent. Some one must have tampered with the lock (*blowing*). It's strangely singular, it's singularly singular! I've shown this key to commercial gentlemen all the way from Paris: they never saw a better key! (*more business*). Well (*giving it up and looking reproachfully on key*), that's pretty singular.

MACAIRE. Let me try. (*He tries, and flings down the key with a curse.*) Bitten.

BERTRAND. Sold again.

DUMONT (*picking up key*). It's a patent key.

MACAIRE. (*to* BERTRAND). The game's up: we must save the swag. (*To* DUMONT.) Sir, since your key, on which I invoke the blight of Egypt, has once more defaulted, my feelings are unequal to a repetition of yesterday's distress, and I shall simply pad the hoof. From Turin you shall receive the address of my banker, and may prosperity attend your ventures. (*To* BERTRAND.) Now, boy! (*To* DUMONT.) Embrace my fatherless child! farewell! (MACAIRE *and* BERTRAND *turn to go off, and are met in the door by the* GENDARMES.)

SCENE III

To these, the BRIGADIER *and* GENDARMES

BRIGADIER. Let no man leave the house.

MACAIRE. Bitten. } *Aside.*

BERTRAND. Sold again. }

DUMONT. Welcome, old friend!

BRIGADIER. It is not the friend that comes; it is the Brigadier. Summon your guests: I must investigate their passports. I am in pursuit of a notorious malefactor, Robert Macaire.

DUMONT. But I was led to believe that both Macaire and his accomplice had been arrested and condemned.

BRIGADIER. They were, but they have once more escaped for the moment, and justice is indefatigable. (*He sits at table R.*) Dumont, a bottle of white wine.

MACAIRE (*to* DUMONT). My excellent friend, I will discharge your commission, and return with all speed. (*Going.*)

BRIGADIER. Halt!

MACAIRE (*returning: as if he saw* BRIGADIER *for the first time*). Ha? a member of the force? Charmed, I'm sure. But you misconceive me: I return at once, and my friend remains behind to answer for me.

BRIGADIER. Justice is insensible to friendship. I shall deal with you in due time. Dumont, that bottle.

MACAIRE. Sir, my friend and I, who are students of character, would grasp the opportunity to share and — may one add? — to pay the bottle. Dumont, three!

BERTRAND. For God's sake! (*Enter* ALINE *and* MAIDS.)

MACAIRE. My friend is an author: so, in a humbler way, am I. Your knowledge of the criminal classes naturally tempts one to pursue so interesting an acquaintance.

BRIGADIER. Justice is impartial. Gentlemen, your health.

MACAIRE. Will not these brave fellows join us?

BRIGADIER. They are on duty; but what matters?

MACAIRE. My dear sir, what is duty? duty is my eye.

BRIGADIER (*solemnly*). And Betty Martin. (GENDARMES *sit at table.*)

MACAIRE *to* BERTRAND). Dear friend, sit down.

BERTRAND (*sitting down*). O Lord!

BRIGADIER (*to* MACAIRE). You seem to be a gentleman of considerable intelligence.

MACAIRE. I fear, sir, you flatter. One has lived, one has loved, and one remembers: that is all. One's *Lives of Celebrated Criminals* has met with a certain success, and one is ever in quest of fresh material.

DUMONT. By the way, a singular thing about my patent key.

BRIGADIER. This gentleman is speaking.

MACAIRE. Excellent Dumont! he means no harm. This Macaire is not personally known to you?

BRIGADIER. Are you connected with justice?

MACAIRE. Ah, sir, justice is a point above a poor author.

BRIGADIER (*with glass*). Justice is the very devil.

MACAIRE. My dear sir, my friend and I, I regret to say, have an appointment in Lyons, or I could spend my life in this society. Charge your glasses: one hour to madness and to joy! What is to-morrow? the enemy of to-day. Wine? the bath of life. One moment: I find I have forgotten my watch. (*He makes for the door.*)

BRIGADIER. Halt!

MACAIRE. Sir, what is this jest?

BRIGADIER. Sentry at the door. Your passports.

MACAIRE. My good man, with all the pleasure in

life. (*Gives papers. The* BRIGADIER *puts on spectacles, and examines them.*)

BERTRAND (*rising, and passing round to* MACAIRE's *other side*). It's life and death: they must soon find it.

MACAIRE (*aside*). Don't I know? My heart's like fire in my body.

BRIGADIER. Your name is?

MACAIRE. It is; one's name is not unknown.

BRIGADIER. Justice exacts your name.

MACAIRE. Henri-Frédéric de Latour de Main de la Tonnerre de Brest.

BRIGADIER. Your profession?

MACAIRE. Gentleman.

BRIGADIER. No, but what is your trade?

MACAIRE. I am an analytical chymist.

BRIGADIER. Justice is inscrutable. Your papers are in order. (*To* BERTRAND.) Now, sir, and yours?

BERTRAND. I feel kind of ill.

MACAIRE. Bertrand, this gentleman addresses you. He is not one of us; in other scenes, in the gay and giddy world of fashion, one is his superior. But to-day he represents the majesty of law; and as a citizen it is one's pride to do him honour.

BRIGADIER. Those are my sentiments.

BERTRAND. I beg your pardon, I —— (*Gives papers.*)

BRIGADIER. Your name?

BERTRAND. Napoleon.

BRIGADIER. What? In your passport it is written Bertrand.

BERTRAND. It's this way: I was born Bertrand, and then I took the name of Napoleon, and I mostly always call myself either Napoleon or Bertrand.

BRIGADIER. The truth is always best. Your profession?

BERTRAND. I am an orphan.

BRIGADIER. What the devil! (*To* MACAIRE.) Is your friend an idiot?

MACAIRE. Pardon me, he is a poet.

BRIGADIER. Poetry is a great hindrance to the ends of justice. Well, take your papers.

MACAIRE. Then we may go?

SCENE IV

To these, CHARLES, *who is seen on the gallery, going to the door of Number Thirteen. Afterwards all the characters but the* NOTARY *and the* MARQUIS

BRIGADIER. One glass more. (BERTRAND *touches* MACAIRE, *and points to* CHARLES, *who enters Number Thirteen.*)

MACAIRE. No more, no more, no more.

BRIGADIER (*rising and taking* MACAIRE *by the arm*). I stipulate!

MACAIRE. Engagement in Turin!

BRIGADIER. Turin?

MACAIRE. Lyons, Lyons!

BERTRAND. For God's sake. . . .

BRIGADIER. Well, good-bye!

MACAIRE. Good-bye, good ——

CHARLES (*from within*). Murder! Help! (*Appearing.*) Help here! The Marquis is murdered.

BRIGADIER. Stand to the door. A man up there. (*A* GENDARME *hurries up staircase into Number Thirteen,*

CHARLES *following him. Enter on both sides of gallery the remaining characters of the piece, except the* NOTARY *and the* MARQUIS.)

MACAIRE. Bitten, by God!
BERTRAND. Lost! } *Aside.*

BRIGADIER (*to* DUMONT). John Paul Dumont, I arrest you.

DUMONT. Do your duty, officer. I can answer for myself and my own people.

BRIGADIER. Yes, but these strangers?

DUMONT. They are strangers to me.

MACAIRE. I am an honest man: I stand upon my rights: search me; or search this person, of whom I know too little. (*Smiting his brow.*) By heaven, I see it all! This morning —— (*To* BERTRAND.) How, sir, did you dare to flaunt your booty in my very face? (*To* BRIGADIER.) He showed me notes; he was up ere day; search him, and you'll find. There stands the murderer.

BERTRAND. O, Macaire! (*He is seized and searched and the notes are found.*)

BRIGADIER. There is blood upon the notes. Handcuffs. (MACAIRE *edging towards the door.*)

BERTRAND. Macaire, you may as well take the bundle. (MACAIRE *is stopped by sentry, and comes front, R.*)

CHARLES (*re-appearing*). Stop, I know the truth. (*He comes down.*) Brigadier, my father is not dead. He is not even dangerously hurt. He has spoken. There is the would-be assassin.

MACAIRE. Hell! (*He darts across to the staircase, and turns on the second step, flashing out the knife.*) Back, hounds! (*He springs up the stair, and confronts*

them from the top.) Fools, I am Robert Macaire! (*As* MACAIRE *turns to flee, he is met by the gendarme coming out of Number Thirteen; he stands an instant checked, is shot from the stage, and falls headlong backward down the stair.* BERTRAND, *with a cry, breaks from the gendarmes, kneels at his side, and raises his head.*)

BERTRAND. Macaire, Macaire, forgive me. I didn't blab; you know I didn't blab.

MACAIRE. Sold again, old boy. Sold for the last time; at least, the last time this side death. Death — what is death? (*He dies.*)

CURTAIN

FABLES

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The fable, as a form of literary art, had at all times a great attraction for Mr. Stevenson; and in an early review of Lord Lytton's "Fables in Song" he attempted to define some of its proper aims and methods. To this class of work, according to his conception of the matter, belonged essentially several of his own semi-supernatural stories, such as "Will of the Mill," "Markheim," and even "Jekyll and Hyde"; in the composition of which there was combined with the dream element, in at least an equal measure, the element of moral allegory or apologue. He was accustomed also to try his hand occasionally on the composition of fables more strictly so called, and cast in the conventional brief and familiar form. By the winter of 1887–88 he had enough of these by him, together with a few others running to greater length, and conceived in a more mystic and legendary vein, to enable him, as he thought, to see his way towards making a book of them. Such a book he promised to Messrs. Longman on the occasion of a visit paid him in New York by a member of the firm in the spring of 1888. Then came his voyage in the Pacific and residence at Samoa. Among the multitude of new interests and images which filled his mind during the last six years of his life, he seems to have given little thought to the proposed book of fables. One or two, however, as will be seen, were added to the collection during this period. That collection, as it stood at the time of his death, was certainly not what its author had meant it to be. Whether it would have seen the light had he lived is doubtful: but after his death it seemed to his representatives of sufficient interest to be handed to Messrs. Longman, in part fulfilment of his old pledge to them, for publication in their Magazine. Its inclusion in the present collected edition of his works naturally follows.

S. C.

I

THE PERSONS OF THE TALE

AFTER the 32nd chapter of *Treasure Island*, two of the puppets strolled out to have a pipe before business should begin again, and met in an open place not far from the story.

"Good morning, Cap'n," said the first, with a man-o'-war salute and a beaming countenance.

"Ah, Silver!" grunted the other. "You're in a bad way, Silver."

"Now, Cap'n Smollett," remonstrated Silver, "dooty is dooty, as I knows, and none better; but we're off dooty now; and I can't see no call to keep up the morality business."

"You're a damned rogue, my man," said the Captain.

"Come, come, Cap'n, be just," returned the other. "There's no call to be angry with me in earnest. I'm on'y a chara'ter in a sea story. I don't really exist."

"Well, I don't really exist either," says the Captain, "which seems to meet that."

"I wouldn't set no limits to what a virtuous cha-a'ter might consider argument," responded Silver.

"But I'm the villain of this tale, I am; and speaking as one seafaring man to another, what I want to know is, what's the odds?"

"Were you never taught your catechism?" said the Captain. "Don't you know there's such a thing as an Author?"

"Such a thing as a Author?" returned John, derisively. "And who better'n me? And the p'int is, if the Author made you, he made Long John, and he made Hands, and Pew, and George Merry — not that George is up to much, for he's little more'n a name; and he made Flint, what there is of him; and he made this here mutiny, you keep such a work about; and he had Tom Redruth shot; and — well, if that's a Author, give me Pew!"

"Don't you believe in a future state?" said Smollett. "Do you think there's nothing but the present story-paper?"

"I don't rightly know for that," said Silver; "and I don't see what it's got to do with it, anyway. What I know is this: if there is sich a thing as a Author, I'm his favourite chara'ter. He does me fathoms better'n he does you — fathoms, he does. And he likes doing me. He keeps me on deck mostly all the time, crutch and all; and he leaves you measling in the hold, where nobody can't see you, nor wants to, and you may lay to that! If there is a Author, by thunder, but he's on my side, and you may lay to it!"

"I see he's giving you a long rope," said the Captain. "But that can't change a man's convictions. I know the Author respects me; I feel it in my bones;

when you and I had that talk at the blockhouse door, who do you think he was for, my man?"

"And don't he respect me?" cried Silver. "Ah, you should 'a' heard me putting down my mutiny, George Merry and Morgan and that lot, no longer ago'n last chapter; you'd 'a' heard something then! You'd 'a' seen what the Author thinks o' me! But come now, do you consider yourself a virtuous chara'ter clean through?"

"God forbid!" said Captain Smollett solemnly. "I am a man that tries to do his duty, and makes a mess of it as often as not. I'm not a very popular man at home, Silver, I'm afraid," and the Captain sighed.

"Ah," says Silver. "Then how about this sequel of yours? Are you to be Cap'n Smollett just the same as ever, and not very popular at home, says you! And if so, why it's *Treasure Island* over again, by thunder; and I'll be Long John, and Pew'll be Pew; and we'll have another mutiny, as like as not. Or are you to be somebody else? And if so, why, what the better are you? and what the worse am I?"

"Why, look here, my man," returned the Captain, "I can't understand how this story comes about at all, can I? I can't see how you and I, who don't exist, should get to speaking here, and smoke our pipes, for all the world like reality? Very well, then, who am I to pipe up with my opinions? I know the Author's on the side of good; he tells me so, it runs out of his pen as he writes. Well, that's all I need to know; I'll take my chance upon the rest."

"It's a fact he seemed to be against George Merry,"

Silver admitted musingly. "But George is little more'n a name at the best of it," he added, brightening. "And to get into soundings for once. What is this good? I made a mutiny, and I been a gentleman o' fortune; well, but by all stories, you ain't no such saint. I'm a man that keeps company very easy; even by your own account, you ain't, and to my certain knowledge, you're a devil to haze. Which is which? Which is good, and which bad? Ah, you tell me that! Here we are in stays, and you may lay to it!"

"We're none of us perfect," replied the Captain. "That's a fact of religion, my man. All I can say is, I try to do my duty; and if you try to do yours, I can't compliment you on your success."

"And so you was the judge, was you?" said Silver, derisively.

"I would be both judge and hangman for you, my man, and never turn a hair," returned the Captain. "But I get beyond that: it mayn't be sound theology, but it's common sense, that what is good is useful too — or there and thereabout, for I don't set up to be a thinker. Now, where would a story go to, if there were no virtuous characters?"

"If you go to that," replied Silver, "where would a story begin, if there wasn't no villains?"

"Well, that's pretty much my thought," said Captain Smollett. "The author has to get a story; that's what he wants; and to get a story, and to have a man like the doctor (say) given a proper chance, he has to put in men like you and Hands. But he's on the right side; and you mind your eye! You're not through this story yet; there's trouble coming for you."

"What'll you bet?" asked John.

"Much I care if there ain't," returned the Captain. "I'm glad enough to be Alexander Smollett, bad as he is; and I thank my stars upon my knees that I'm not Silver. But there's the ink-bottle opening. To quarters!"

And indeed the Author was just then beginning to write the words:

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE SINKING SHIP

"SIR," said the first lieutenant, bursting into the Captain's cabin, "the ship is going down."

"Very well, Mr. Spoker," said the Captain; "but that is no reason for going about half-shaved. Exercise your mind a moment, Mr. Spoker, and you will see that to the philosophic eye there is nothing new in our position: the ship (if she is to go down at all) may be said to have been going down since she was launched."

"She is settling fast," said the first lieutenant, as he returned from shaving.

"Fast, Mr. Spoker?" asked the Captain. "The expression is a strange one, for time (if you will think of it) is only relative."

"Sir," said the lieutenant, "I think it is scarcely worth while to embark in such a discussion when we shall all be in Davy Jones's Locker in ten minutes."

"By parity of reasoning," returned the Captain gently, "it would never be worth while to begin any inquiry of importance; the odds are always overwhelming that we must die before we shall have brought it to an end. You have not considered, Mr. Spoker, the situation of man," said the Captain, smiling and shaking his head.

"I am much more engaged in considering the position of the ship," said Mr. Spoker.

"Spoken like a good officer," replied the Captain, laying his hand on the lieutenant's shoulder.

On deck they found the men had broken into the spirit-room, and were fast getting drunk.

"My men," said the Captain, "there is no sense in this. The ship is going down, you will tell me, in ten minutes: well, and what then? To the philosophic eye, there is nothing new in our position. All our lives long, we may have been about to break a blood-vessel or to be struck by lightning, not merely in ten minutes, but in ten seconds; and that has not prevented us from eating dinner, no, nor from putting money in the Savings Bank. I assure you, with my hand on my heart, I fail to comprehend your attitude."

The men were already too far gone to pay much heed.

"This is a very painful sight, Mr. Spoker," said the Captain.

"And yet to the philosophic eye, or whatever it is," replied the first lieutenant, "they may be said to have been getting drunk since they came aboard."

"I do not know if you always follow my thought, Mr. Spoker," returned the Captain gently. "But let us proceed."

In the powder magazine they found an old salt smoking his pipe.

"Good God," cried the Captain, "what are you about?"

"Well, sir," said the old salt, apologetically, "they told me as she were going down."

"And suppose she were?" said the Captain. "To the philosophic eye, there would be nothing new in our position. Life, my old shipmate, life, at any moment and in any view, is as dangerous as a sinking ship; and yet it is man's handsome fashion to carry umbrellas, to wear indiarubber overshoes, to begin vast works, and to conduct himself in every way as if he might hope to be eternal. And for my own poor part I should despise the man who, even on board a sinking ship, should omit to take a pill or to wind up his watch. That, my friend, would not be the human attitude."

"I beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Spoker. "But what is precisely the difference between shaving in a sinking ship and smoking in a powder magazine?"

"Or doing anything at all in any conceivable circumstances?" cried the Captain. "Perfectly conclusive; give me a cigar!"

Two minutes afterwards the ship blew up with a glorious detonation.

III

THE TWO MATCHES

One day there was a traveller in the woods in California, in the dry season, when the Trades were blowing strong. He had ridden a long way, and he was tired and hungry, and dismounted from his horse to smoke a pipe. But when he felt in his pocket, he found but two matches. He struck the first, and it would not light.

"Here is a pretty state of things," said the traveller. "Dying for a smoke; only one match left; and that certain to miss fire! Was there ever a creature so unfortunate? And yet," thought the traveller, "suppose I light this match, and smoke my pipe, and shake out the dottle here in the grass—the grass might catch on fire, for it is dry like tinder; and while I snatch out the flames in front, they might evade and run behind me, and seize upon yon bush of poison oak; before I could reach it, that would have blazed up; over the bush I see a pine tree hung with moss; that too would fly in fire upon the instant to its topmost bough; and the flame of that long torch—how would the trade wind take and brandish that through the inflammable forest! I hear this dell roar in a moment with the joint voice of wind and fire, I see myself gallop

for my soul, and the flying conflagration chase and outflank me through the hills; I see this pleasant forest burn for days, and the cattle roasted, and the springs dried up, and the farmer ruined, and his children cast upon the world. What a world hangs upon this moment!"

With that he struck the match. and it missed fire.

"Thank God," said the traveller, and put his pipe in his pocket.

IV

THE SICK MAN AND THE FIREMAN

THERE was once a sick man in a burning house, to whom there entered a fireman. "Do not save me," said the sick man. "Save those who are strong."

"Will you kindly tell me why?" inquired the fireman, for he was a civil fellow.

"Nothing could possibly be fairer," said the sick man. "The strong should be preferred in all cases, because they are of more service in the world."

The fireman pondered a while, for he was a man of some philosophy. "Granted," said he at last, as a part of the roof fell in; "but for the sake of conversation, what would you lay down as the proper service of the strong?"

"Nothing can possibly be easier," returned the sick man: "the proper service of the strong is to help the weak."

Again the fireman reflected, for there was nothing hasty about this excellent creature. "I could forgive you being sick," he said at last, as a portion of the wall fell out, "but I cannot bear your being such a fool." And with that he heaved up his fireman's axe, for he was eminently just, and clove the sick man to the bed.

V

THE DEVIL AND THE INNKEEPER

ONCE upon a time the devil stayed at an inn, where no one knew him, for they were people whose education had been neglected. He was bent on mischief, and for a time kept everybody by the ears. But at last the innkeeper set a watch upon the devil and took him in the fact.

The innkeeper got a rope's end.

"Now I am going to thrash you," said the innkeeper.

"You have no right to be angry with me," said the devil. "I am only the devil, and it is my nature to do wrong."

"Is that so?" asked the innkeeper.

"Fact, I assure you," said the devil.

"You really cannot help doing ill?" asked the innkeeper.

"Not in the smallest," said the devil; "it would be useless cruelty to thrash a thing like me."

"It would indeed," said the innkeeper.

And he made a noose and hanged the devil.

"There," said the innkeeper.

VI

THE PENITENT

A MAN met a lad weeping. "What do you weep for?" he asked.

"I am weeping for my sins," said the lad.

"You must have little to do," said the man.

The next day they met again. Once more the lad was weeping. "Why do you weep now?" asked the man.

"I am weeping because I have nothing to eat," said the lad.

"I thought it would come to that," said the man.

VII

THE YELLOW PAINT

In a certain city, there lived a physician who sold yellow paint. This was of so singular a virtue that whoso was bedaubed with it from head to heel was set free from the dangers of life, and the bondage of sin, and the fear of death forever. So the physician said in his prospectus; and so said all the citizens in the city; and there was nothing more urgent in men's hearts than to be properly painted themselves, and nothing they took more delight in than to see others painted. There was in the same city a young man of a very good family but of a somewhat reckless life; who had reached the age of manhood and would have nothing to say to the paint: "To-morrow was soon enough," said he; and when the morrow came he would still put it off. So he might have continued to do until his death; only, he had a friend of about his own age and much of his own manners; and this youth, taking a walk in the public street, with not one fleck of paint upon his body, was suddenly run down by a water-cart and cut off in the heyday of his nakedness. This shook the other to the soul; so that I never beheld a man more earnest to be painted; and on the very same evening, in the presence of all his family, to appropriate music, and himself weeping aloud, he received three complete coats

and a touch of varnish on the top. The physician (who was himself affected even to tears) protested he had never done a job so thorough.

"Some two months afterwards, the young man was carried on a stretcher to the physician's house.

"What is the meaning of this?" he cried, as soon as the door was opened. "I was to be set free from all the dangers of life; and here have I been run down by that self-same water-cart, and my leg is broken."

"Dear me!" said the physician. "This is very sad. But I perceive I must explain to you the action of my paint. A broken bone is a mighty small affair at the worst of it; and it belongs to a class of accidents to which my paint is quite inapplicable. Sin, my dear young friend, sin is the sole calamity that a wise man should apprehend; it is against sin that I have fitted you out; and when you come to be tempted, you will give me news of my paint!"

"O!" said the young man, "I did not understand that, and it seems rather disappointing. But I have no doubt all is for the best; and in the meanwhile, I shall be obliged to you if you will set my leg."

"That is none of my business," said the physician; "but if your bearers will carry you round the corner to the surgeon's, I feel sure he will afford relief."

Some three years later, the young man came running to the physician's house in a great perturbation. "What is the meaning of this?" he cried. "Here was I to be set free from the bondage of sin; and I have just committed forgery, arson, and murder."

"Dear me," said the physician. "This is very serious. Off with your clothes at once." And as soon as

the young man had stripped, he examined him from head to foot. "No," he cried with great relief, "there is not a flake broken. Cheer up, my young friend, your paint is as good as new."

"Good God!" cried the young man, "and what then can be the use of it?"

"Why," said the physician, "I perceive I must explain to you the nature of the action of my paint. It does not exactly prevent sin; it extenuates instead the painful consequences. It is not so much for this world as for the next; it is not against life; in short, it is against death that I have fitted you out. And when you come to die, you will give me news of my paint."

"O!" cried the young man, "I had not understood that, and it seems a little disappointing. But, there, no doubt all is for the best: and in the meanwhile, I shall be obliged if you will help me to undo the evil I have brought on innocent persons."

"That is none of my business," said the physician; "but if you will go round the corner to the police office, I feel sure it will afford you relief to give yourself up."

Six weeks later, the physician was called to the town gaol.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried the young man. "Here am I literally crusted with your paint; and I have broken my leg, and committed all the crimes in the calendar, and must be hanged to-morrow; and am in the meanwhile in a fear so extreme that I lack words to picture it."

"Dear me," said the physician. "This is really amazing. Well, well; perhaps, if you had not been painted, you would have been more frightened still."

VIII

THE HOUSE OF ELD

So soon as the child began to speak, the gyve was riveted; and the boys and girls limped about their play like convicts. Doubtless it was more pitiable to see and more painful to bear in youth; but even the grown folk, besides being very unhandy on their feet, were often sick with ulcers.

About the time when Jack was ten years old, many strangers began to journey through that country. These he beheld going lightly by on the long roads, and the thing amazed him. "I wonder how it comes," he asked, "that all these strangers are so quick afoot, and we must drag about our fetter."

"My dear boy," said his uncle, the catechist, "do not complain about your fetter, for it is the only thing that makes life worth living. None are happy, none are good, none are respectable, that are not gyved like us. And I must tell you, besides, it is very dangerous talk. If you grumble of your iron, you will have no luck; if ever you take it off, you will be instantly smitten by a thunderbolt."

"Are there no thunderbolts for these strangers?" asked Jack.

"Jupiter is longsuffering to the benighted," returned the catechist.

"Upon my word, I could wish I had been less fortunate," said Jack. "For if I had been born benighted, I might now be going free; and it cannot be denied the iron is inconvenient, and the ulcer hurts."

"Ah!" cried his uncle, "do not envy the heathen! Theirs is a sad lot! Ah, poor souls, if they but knew the joys of being fettered! Poor souls, my heart yearns for them. But the truth is they are vile, odious, insolent, ill-conditioned, stinking brutes, not truly human —for what is a man without a fetter?—and you cannot be too particular not to touch or speak with them."

After this talk, the child would never pass one of the unfettered on the road but what he spat at him and called him names, which was the practice of the children in that part.

It chanced one day, when he was fifteen, he went into the woods, and the ulcer pained him. It was a fair day, with a blue sky; all the birds were singing; but Jack nursed his foot. Presently, another song began; it sounded like the singing of a person, only far more gay; at the same time, there was a beating on the earth. Jack put aside the leaves; and there was a lad of his own village, leaping, and dancing and singing to himself in a green dell; and on the grass beside him lay the dancer's iron.

"O!" cried Jack, "you have your fetter off!"

"For God's sake, don't tell your uncle!" cried the lad.

"If you fear my uncle," returned Jack, "why do you not fear the thunderbolt?"

"That is only an old wives' tale," said the other. "It is only told to children. Scores of us come here

among the woods and dance for nights together, and are none the worse."

This put Jack in a thousand new thoughts. He was a grave lad; he had no mind to dance himself; he wore his fetter manfully and tended his ulcer without complaint. But he loved the less to be deceived or to see others cheated. He began to lie in wait for heathen travellers, at covert parts of the road, and in the dusk of the day, so that he might speak with them unseen; and these were greatly taken with their wayside questioner, and told him things of weight. The wearing of gyves (they said) was no command of Jupiter's. It was the contrivance of a white-faced thing, a sorcerer, that dwelt in that country in the Wood of Eld. He was one like Glaucus that could change his shape, yet he could be always told; for when he was crossed, he gobbled like a turkey. He had three lives; but the third smiting would make an end of him indeed; and with that his house of sorcery would vanish, the gyves fall, and the villagers take hands and dance like children.

"And in your country?" Jack would ask.

But at this the travellers, with one accord, would put him off; until Jack began to suppose there was no land entirely happy. Or, if there were, it must be one that kept its folk at home; which was natural enough.

But the case of the gyves weighed upon him. The sight of the children limping stuck in his eyes; the groans of such as dressed their ulcers haunted him. And it came at last in his mind that he was born to free them.

There was in that village a sword of heavenly forgery, beaten upon Vulcan's anvil. It was never used but in

the temple, and then the flat of it only; and it hung on a nail by the catechist's chimney. Early one night, Jack rose, and took the sword, and was gone out of the house and the village in the darkness.

All night he walked at a venture; and when day came, he met strangers going to the fields. Then he asked after the Wood of Eld and the house of sorcery; and one said north, and one south; until Jack saw that they deceived him. So then, when he asked his way of any man, he showed the bright sword naked; and at that the gyve on the man's ankle rang, and answered in his stead; and the word was still *Straight on.* But the man, when his gyve spoke, spat and struck at Jack, and threw stones at him as he went away; so that his head was broken.

So he came to that wood, and entered in, and he was aware of a house in a low place, where funguses grew, and the trees met, and the steaming of the marsh arose about it like a smoke. It was a fine house, and a very rambling; some parts of it were ancient like the hills, and some but of yesterday, and none finished; and all the ends of it were open, so that you could go in from every side. Yet it was in good repair, and all the chimneys smoked.

Jack went in through the gable; and there was one room after another, all bare, but all furnished in part so that a man could dwell there; and in each there was a fire burning where a man could warm himself, and a table spread where he might eat. But Jack saw nowhere any living creature; only the bodies of some stuffed.

"This is a hospitable house," said Jack; "but the

ground must be quaggy underneath, for at every step the building quakes."

He had gone some time in the house, when he began to be hungry. Then he looked at the food, and at first he was afraid; but he bared the sword, and by the shining of the sword, it seemed the food was honest. So he took the courage to sit down and eat, and he was refreshed in mind and body.

"This is strange," thought he, "that in the house of sorcery, there should be food so wholesome."

As he was yet eating, there came into that room the appearance of his uncle, and Jack was afraid because he had taken the sword. But his uncle was never more kind, and sat down to meat with him, and praised him because he had taken the sword. Never had these two been more pleasantly together, and Jack was full of love to the man.

"It was very well done," said his uncle, "to take the sword and come yourself into the House of Eld; a good thought and a brave deed. But now you are satisfied; and we may go home to dinner arm in arm."

"O, dear, no!" said Jack. "I am not satisfied yet."

"How!" cried his uncle. "Are you not warmed by the fire? Does not this food sustain you?"

"I see the food to be wholesome," said Jack, "and still it is no proof that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg."

Now at this the appearance of his uncle gobbled like a turkey.

"Jupiter!" cried Jack, "is this the sorcerer?"

His hand held back and his heart failed him for the

love he bore his uncle; but he heaved up the sword and smote the appearance on the head; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his uncle; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack's ears, and his knees smote together, and conscience cried upon him; and yet he was strengthened, and there woke in his bones the lust of that enchanter's blood. "If the gyves are to fall," said he, "I must go through with this, and when I get home, I shall find my uncle dancing."

So he went on after the bloodless thing. In the way, he met the appearance of his father; and his father was incensed, and railed upon him, and called to him upon his duty, and bade him be home, while there was yet time. "For you can still," said he, "be home by sunset; and then all will be forgiven."

"God knows," said Jack, "I fear your anger; but yet your anger does not prove that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg."

And at that the appearance of his father gobbled like a turkey.

"Ah, heaven," cried Jack, "the sorcerer again!"

The blood ran backward in his body and his joints rebelled against him for the love he bore his father; but he heaved up the sword, and plunged it in the heart of the appearance; and the appearance cried out aloud with the voice of his father; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack's ears, and his soul was darkened; but now rage came to him. "I have done what I dare not think upon," said he. "I will go to an end

with it, or perish. And when I get home, I pray God this may be a dream and I may find my father dancing."

So he went on after the bloodless thing that had escaped; and in the way he met the appearance of his mother, and she wept. "What have you done?" she cried. "What is this that you have done? O, come home (where you may be by bedtime) ere you do more ill to me and mine; for it is enough to smite my brother and your father."

"Dear mother, it is not these that I have smitten," said Jack; "it was but the enchanter in their shape. And even if I had, it would not prove that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg."

And at this the appearance gobbled like a turkey.

He never knew how he did that; but he swung the sword on the one side, and clove the appearance through the midst; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his mother; and fell to the ground; and with the fall of it, the house was gone from over Jack's head, and he stood alone in the woods, and the gyve was loosened from his leg.

"Well," said he, "the enchanter is now dead and the fetter gone." But the cries rang in his soul, and the day was like night to him. "This has been a sore business," said he. "Let me get forth out of the wood, and see the good that I have done to others."

He thought to leave the fetter where it lay, but when he turned to go, his mind was otherwise. So he stooped and put the gyve in his bosom; and the rough iron galled him as he went, and his bosom bled.

Now when he was forth of the wood upon the highway, he met folk returning from the field; and those

he met had no fetter on the right leg, but behold! they had one upon the left. Jack asked them what it signified; and they said, "that was the new wear, for the old was found to be a superstition." Then he looked at them nearly; and there was a new ulcer on the left ankle, and the old one on the right was not yet healed.

"Now may God forgive me!" cried Jack, "I would I were well home."

And when he was home, there lay his uncle smitten on the head, and his father pierced through the heart, and his mother cloven through the midst. And he sat in the lone house and wept beside the bodies.

MORAL

Old is the tree and the fruit good,
Very old and thick the wood.
Woodman, is your courage stout?
Beware! the root is wrapped about
Your mother's heart, your father's bones;
And like the mandrake comes with groans.

IX

THE FOUR REFORMERS

FOUR reformers met under a bramble bush. They were all agreed the world must be changed. "We must abolish property," said one.

"We must abolish marriage," said the second.

"We must abolish God," said the third.

"I wish we could abolish work," said the fourth.

"Do not let us get beyond practical politics," said the first. "The first thing is to reduce men to a common level."

"The first thing," said the second, "is to give freedom to the sexes."

"The first thing," said the third, "is to find out how to do it."

"The first step," said the first, "is to abolish the Bible."

"The first thing," said the second, "is to abolish the laws."

"The first thing," said the third, "is to abolish mankind."

X

THE MAN AND HIS FRIEND

A MAN quarrelled with his friend.

"I have been much deceived in you," said the man.

And the friend made a face at him and went away.

A little after, they both died, and came together before the great white Justice of the Peace. It began to look black for the friend, but the man for a while had a clear character and was getting in good spirits.

"I find here some record of a quarrel," said the justice, looking in his notes. "Which of you was in the wrong?"

"He was," said the man. "He spoke ill of me behind my back."

"Did he so?" said the justice. "And pray how did he speak about your neighbours?"

"O, he had always a nasty tongue," said the man.

"And you chose him for your friend?" cried the justice. "My good fellow, we have no use here for fools."

So the man was cast in the pit, and the friend laughed out aloud in the dark and remained to be tried on other charges.

XI

THE READER

"I NEVER read such an impious book," said the reader, throwing it on the floor.

"You need not hurt me," said the book; "you will only get less for me second hand, and I did not write myself."

"That is true," said the reader. "My quarrel is with your author."

"Ah, well," said the book, "you need not buy his rant."

"That is true," said the reader. "But I thought him such a cheerful writer."

"I find him so," said the book.

"You must be differently made from me," said the reader.

"Let me tell you a fable," said the book. "There were two men wrecked upon a desert island; one of them made believe he was at home, the other admitted ——"

"Oh, I know your kind of fable," said the reader. "They both died."

"And so they did," said the book. "No doubt of that. And everybody else."

"That is true," said the reader. "Push it a little further for this once. And when they were all dead?"

"They were in God's hands the same as before," said the book.

"Not much to boast of, by your account," cried the reader.

"Who is impious now?" said the book.

And the reader put him on the fire.

The coward crouches from the rod,
And loathes the iron face of God.

XII

THE CITIZEN AND THE TRAVELLER

"Look round you," said the citizen. "This is the largest market in the world."

"Oh, surely not," said the traveller.

"Well, perhaps not the largest," said the citizen, "but much the best."

"You are certainly wrong there," said the traveller. "I can tell you . . ."

They buried the stranger at the dusk.

XIII

THE DISTINGUISHED STRANGER

ONCE upon a time there came to this earth a visitor from a neighbouring planet. And he was met at the place of his descent by a great philosopher, who was to show him everything.

First of all they came through a wood, and the stranger looked upon the trees. "Whom have we here?" said he.

"These are only vegetables," said the philosopher. "They are alive, but not at all interesting."

"I don't know about that," said the stranger. "They seem to have very good manners. Do they never speak?"

"They lack the gift," said the philosopher.

"Yet I think I hear them sing," said the other.

"That is only the wind among the leaves," said the philosopher. "I will explain to you the theory of winds: it is very interesting."

"Well," said the stranger, "I wish I knew what they are thinking."

"They cannot think," said the philosopher.

"I don't know about that," returned the stranger: and then laying his hand upon a trunk: "I like these people," said he.

"They are not people at all," said the philosopher. "Come along."

Next they came through a meadow where there were cows.

"These are very dirty people," said the stranger.

"They are not people at all," said the philosopher; and he explained what a cow is in scientific words which I have forgotten.

"That is all one to me," said the stranger. "But why do they never look up?"

"Because they are graminivorous," said the philosopher; "and to live upon grass, which is not highly nutritious, requires so close an attention to business that they have no time to think, or speak, or look at the scenery, or keep themselves clean."

"Well," said the stranger, "that is one way to live, no doubt. But I prefer the people with the green heads."

Next they came into a city, and the streets were full of men and women.

"These are very odd people," said the stranger.

"They are the people of the greatest nation in the world," said the philosopher.

"Are they indeed?" said the stranger. "They scarcely look so."

XIV

THE CARTHORSES AND THE SADDLEHORSE

Two carthorses, a gelding and a mare, were brought to Samoa, and put in the same field with a saddlehorse to run free on the island. They were rather afraid to go near him, for they saw he was a saddlehorse, and supposed he would not speak to them. Now the saddlehorse had never seen creatures so big. "These must be great chiefs," thought he, and he approached them civilly. "Lady and gentleman," said he, "I understand you are from the colonies. I offer you my affectionate compliments, and make you heartily welcome to the island."

The colonials looked at him askance, and consulted with each other.

"Who can he be?" said the gelding.

"He seems suspiciously civil," said the mare.

"I do not think he can be much account," said the gelding.

"Depend upon it he is only a Kanaka," said the mare.

Then they turned to him.

"Go to the devil!" said the gelding.

"I wonder at your impudence, speaking to persons of our quality!" cried the mare.

The saddlehorse went away by himself. "I was right," said he, "they are great chiefs."

XV

THE TADPOLE AND THE FROG

"Be ashamed of yourself," said the frog. "When I was a tadpole, I had no tail."

"Just what I thought!" said the tadpole. "You never were a tadpole."

XVI

SOMETHING IN IT

THE natives told him many tales. In particular, they warned him of the house of yellow reeds tied with black sinnet, how anyone who touched it became instantly the prey of Akaānga, and was handed on to him by Miru the ruddy, and hocussed with the kava of the dead, and baked in the ovens and eaten by the eaters of the dead.

"There is nothing in it," said the missionary.

There was a bay upon that island, a very fair bay to look upon; but, by the native saying, it was death to bathe there. "There is nothing in that," said the missionary; and he came to the bay and went swimming. Presently an eddy took him and bore him towards the reef. "Oho!" thought the missionary, "it seems there is something in it after all." And he swam the harder, but the eddy carried him away. "I do not care about this eddy," said the missionary; and even as he said it, he was aware of a house raised on piles above the sea; it was built of yellow reeds, one reed joined with another, and the whole bound with black sinnet; a ladder led to the door, and all about the house hung calabashes. He had never seen such a house, nor yet such calabashes; and the eddy set for

the ladder. "This is singular," said the missionary, "but there can be nothing in it." And he laid hold of the ladder and went up. It was a fine house; but there was no man there; and when the missionary looked back he saw no island, only the heaving of the sea. "It is strange about the island," said the missionary, "but who's afraid? my stories are the true ones." And he laid hold of a calabash, for he was one that loved curiosities. Now he had no sooner laid hand upon the calabash than that which he handled, and that which he saw and stood on, burst like a bubble and was gone; and night closed upon him, and the waters, and the meshes of the net; and he wallowed there like a fish.

"A body would think there was something in this," said the missionary. "But if these tales are true, I wonder what about my tales!"

Now the flaming of Akaänga's torch drew near in the night; and the misshapen hands groped in the meshes of the net; and they took the missionary between the finger and the thumb, and bore him dripping in the night and silence to the place of the ovens of Miru. And there was Miru, ruddy in the glow of the ovens; and there sat her four daughters and made the kava of the dead; and there sat the comers out of the islands of the living dripping and lamenting.

This was a dread place to reach for any of the sons of men. But of all who ever came there, the missionary was the most concerned; and to make things worse the person next him was a convert of his own.

"Aha," said the convert, "so you are here like your neighbours? And how about all your stories?"

"It seems," said the missionary with bursting tears, "that there was nothing in them."

By this the kava of the dead was ready and the daughters of Miru began to intone in the old manner of singing. "Gone are the green islands and the bright sea, the sun and the moon and the forty million stars, and life and love and hope. Henceforth is no more, only to sit in the night and silence, and see your friends devoured; for life is a deceit and the bandage is taken from your eyes."

Now when the singing was done, one of the daughters came with the bowl. Desire of that kava rose in the missionary's bosom; he lusted for it like a swimmer for the land, or a bridegroom for his bride; and he reached out his hand, and took the bowl, and would have drunk. And then he remembered, and put it back.

"Drink!" sang the daughter of Miru. "There is no kava like the kava of the dead, and to drink of it once is the reward of living."

"I thank you. It smells excellent," said the missionary. "But I am a blue-ribbon man myself; and though I am aware there is a difference of opinion even in our own confession, I have always held kava to be excluded."

"What!" cried the convert. "Are you going to respect a taboo at a time like this? And you were always so opposed to taboos when you were alive!"

"To other people's," said the missionary. "Never to my own."

"But yours have all proved wrong," said the convert.

"It looks like it," said the missionary, "and I can't help that. No reason why I should break my word."

"I never heard the like of this!" cried the daughter of Miru. "Pray, what do you expect to gain?"

"This is not the point," said the missionary. "I took this pledge for others, I am not going to break it for myself."

The daughter of Miru was puzzled; she came and told her mother, and Miru was vexed; and they went and told Akaänga.

"I don't know what to do about this," said Akaänga; and he came and reasoned with the missionary.

"But there *is* such a thing as right and wrong," said the missionary; "and your ovens cannot alter that."

"Give the kava to the rest," said Akaänga to the daughters of Miru. "I must get rid of this sea-lawyer instantly, or worse will come of it."

The next moment the missionary came up in the midst of the sea, and there before him were the palm trees of the island. He swam to the shore gladly, and landed. Much matter of thought was in that missionary's mind.

"I seem to have been misinformed upon some points," said he. "Perhaps there is not much in it as I supposed; but there is something in it after all. Let me be glad of that."

And he rang the bell for service.

MORAL

The sticks break, the stones crumble,
The eternal altars tilt and tumble,
Sanctions and tales dislimn like mist
About the amazed evangelist.
He stands unshook from age to youth
Upon one pin-point of the truth.

XVII

FAITH, HALF-FAITH, AND NO FAITH AT ALL

In the ancient days there went three men upon pilgrimage; one was a priest, and one was a virtuous person, and the third was an old rover with his axe.

As they went, the priest spoke about the grounds of faith.

"We find the proofs of our religion in the works of nature," said he, and beat his breast.

"That is true," said the virtuous person.

"The peacock has a scrannel voice," said the priest, "as has been laid down always in our books. How cheering!" he cried, in a voice like one that wept. "How comforting!"

"I require no such proofs," said the virtuous person.

"Then you have no reasonable faith," said the priest.

"Great is the right, and shall prevail!" cried the virtuous person. "There is loyalty in my soul; be sure, there is loyalty in the mind of Odin."

"These are but playings upon words," returned the priest. "A sackful of such trash is nothing to the peacock."

Just then they passed a country farm where there was a peacock seated on a rail, and the bird opened its mouth and sang with the voice of a nightingale.

"Where are you now?" asked the virtuous person.

"And yet this shakes not me! Great is the truth and shall prevail!"

"The devil fly away with that peacock!" said the priest; and he was downcast for a mile or two.

But presently they came to a shrine, where a Fakeer performed miracles.

"Ah!" said the priest, "here are the true grounds of faith. The peacock was but an adminicle. This is the base of our religion." And he beat upon his breast and groaned like one with colic.

"Now to me," said the virtuous person, "all this is as little to the purpose as the peacock. I believe because I see the right is great and must prevail; and this Fakeer might carry on with his conjuring tricks till doomsday, and it would not play bluff upon a man like me."

Now at this the Fakeer was so much incensed that his hand trembled; and lo! in the midst of a miracle the cards fell from up his sleeve.

"Where are you now?" asked the virtuous person. 'And yet it shakes not me!"

"The devil fly away with the Fakeer!" cried the priest. "I really do not see the good of going on with this pilgrimage."

"Cheer up!" cried the virtuous person. "Great is the right and shall prevail!"

"If you are quite sure it will prevail?" says the priest.

"I pledge my word for that," said the virtuous person.

So the other began to go on again with a better heart.

At last one came running, and told them all was lost: that the powers of darkness had besieged the Heavenly Mansions, that Odin was to die, and evil triumph.

"I have been grossly deceived," cried the virtuous person.

"All is lost now," said the priest.

"I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the devil?" said the virtuous person.

"O, I hope not," said the priest. "And at any rate we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?" says he to the rover.

"I am off to die with Odin," said the rover.

XVIII

THE TOUCHSTONE

THE King was a man that stood well before the world, his smile was sweet as clover, but his soul withinsides was as little as a pea. He had two sons; and the younger son was a boy after his heart, but the elder was one whom he feared. It befel one morning that the drum sounded in the dun before it was yet day; and the King rode with his two sons, and a brave array behind them. They rode two hours, and came to the foot of a brown mountain that was very steep.

"Where do we ride?" said the elder son.

"Across this brown mountain," said the King, and smiled to himself.

"My father knows what he is doing," said the younger son.

And they rode two hours more, and came to the sides of a black river that was wondrous deep.

"And where do we ride?" asked the elder son.

"Over this black river," said the King, and smiled to himself.

"My father knows what he is doing," said the younger son.

And they rode all that day, and about the time of the sunsetting came to the side of a lake, where was a great dun.

"It is here we ride," said the King; "to a King's house, and a priest's, and a house where you will learn much."

At the gates of the dun, the King who was a priest met them, and he was a grave man, and beside him stood his daughter, and she was as fair as the morn, and one that smiled and looked down.

"These are my two sons," said the first King.

"And here is my daughter," said the King who was a priest.

"She is a wonderful fine maid," said the first King, "and I like her manner of smiling."

"They are wonderful well-grown lads," said the second, "and I like their gravity."

And then the two Kings looked at each other, and said, "The thing may come about."

And in the meanwhile the two lads looked upon the maid, and the one grew pale and the other red; and the maid looked upon the ground smiling.

"Here is the maid that I shall marry," said the elder. "For I think she smiled upon me."

But the younger plucked his father by the sleeve. "Father," said he, "a word in your ear. If I find favour in your sight, might not I wed this maid, for I think she smiles upon me?"

"A word in yours," said the King his father. "Waiting is good hunting, and when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home."

Now they were come into the dun, and feasted; and this was a great house, so that the lads were astonished; and the King that was a priest sat at the end of the board and was silent, so that the lads were filled

with reverence; and the maid served them smiling with downcast eyes, so that their hearts were enlarged.

Before it was day, the elder son arose, and he found the maid at her weaving, for she was a diligent girl. "Maid," quoth he, "I would fain marry you."

"You must speak with my father," said she, and she looked upon the ground smiling, and became like the rose.

"Her heart is with me," said the elder son, and he went down to the lake and sang.

A little after came the younger son. "Maid," quoth he, "if our fathers were agreed, I would like well to marry you."

"You can speak to my father," said she, and looked upon the ground and smiled and grew like the rose."

"She is a dutiful daughter," said the younger son, "she will make an obedient wife." And then he thought, "What shall I do?" and he remembered the King her father was a priest; so he went into the temple and sacrificed a weasel and a hare.

Presently the news got about; and the two lads and the first King were called into the presence of the King who was a priest, where he sat upon the high seat.

"Little I reck of gear," said the King who was a priest, "and little of power. For we live here among the shadows of things, and the heart is sick of seeing them. And we stay here in the wind like raiment drying, and the heart is weary of the wind. But one thing I love, and that is truth; and for one thing will I give my daughter, and that is the trial stone. For in the light of that stone the seeming goes, and the being

shows, and all things besides are worthless. Therefore, lads, if ye would wed my daughter, out foot, and bring me the stone of touch, for that is the price of her."

"A word in your ear," said the younger son to his father. "I think we do very well without this stone."

"A word in yours," said his father. "I am of your way of thinking; but when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home." And he smiled to the King that was a priest.

But the elder son got to his feet, and called the King that was a priest by the name of father. "For whether I marry the maid or no, I will call you by that word for the love of your wisdom; and even now I will ride forth and search the world for the stone of touch." So he said farewell and rode into the world.

"I think I will go, too," said the younger son, "if I can have your leave. For my heart goes out to the maid."

"You will ride home with me," said his father.

So they rode home, and when they came to the dun, the King had his son into his treasury. "Here," said he, "is the touchstone which shows truth; for there is no truth but plain truth; and if you will look in this, you will see yourself as you are."

And the younger son looked in it, and saw his face as it were the face of a beardless youth, and he was well enough pleased; for the thing was a piece of a mirror.

"Here is no such great thing to make a work about," said he; "but if it will get me the maid, I shall never complain. But what a fool is my brother to ride into the world, and the thing all the while at home."

So they rode back to the other dun, and showed the mirror to the King that was a priest; and when he had looked in it, and seen himself like a King, and his house like a King's house, and all things like themselves, he cried out and blessed God. "For now I know," said he, "there is no truth but the plain truth; and I am a King indeed, although my heart misgave me." And he pulled down his temple, and built a new one; and then the younger son was married to the maid.

In the meantime the elder son rode into the world to find the touchstone of the trial of truth: and whenever he came to a place of habitation, he would ask the men if they had heard of it. And in every place the men answered: "Not only have we heard of it, but we, alone of all men, possess the thing itself, and it hangs in the side of our chimney to this day." Then would the elder son be glad, and beg for a sight of it. And sometimes it would be a piece of mirror, that showed the seeming of things, and then he would say, "This can never be, for there should be more than seeming." And sometimes it would be a lump of coal, which showed nothing; and then he would say, "This can never be, for at least there is the seeming." And sometimes it would be a touchstone indeed, beautiful in hue, adorned with polishing, the light inhabiting its sides; and when he found this, he would beg the thing, and the persons of that place would give it him, for all men were very generous of that gift; so that at the last he had his wallet full of them, and they chinked together when he rode; and when he halted by the side of the way he would take them out and try them, till his head turned like the sails upon a windmill.

"A murrain upon this business!" said the elder son, "for I perceive no end to it. Here I have the red, and here the blue and the green; and to me they seem all excellent, and yet shame each other. A murrain on the trade! If it were not for the King that is a priest and whom I have called my father, and if it were not for the fair maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge, I would even tumble them all into the salt sea, and go home and be a King like other folk."

But he was like the hunter that has seen a stag upon a mountain, so that the night may fall, and the fire be kindled and the lights shine in his house, but desire of that stag is single in his bosom.

Now after many years the elder son came upon the sides of the salt sea; and it was night, and a savage place, and the clamour of the sea was loud. There he was aware of a house, and a man that sat there by the light of a candle, for he had no fire. Now the elder son came in to him, and the man gave him water to drink, for he had no bread; and wagged his head when he was spoken to, for he had no words.

"Have you the touchstone of truth?" asked the elder son; and when the man had wagged his head, "I might have known that," cried the elder son, "I have here a wallet full of them!" And with that he laughed, although his heart was weary.

And with that the man laughed too, and with the puff of his laughter the candle went out.

"Sleep," said the man, "for now I think you have come far enough; and your quest is ended, and my candle is out."

Now when the morning came, the man gave him a clear pebble in his hand, and it had no beauty and no colour, and the elder son looked upon it scornfully and shook his head, and he went away, for it seemed a small affair to him.

All that day he rode, and his mind was quiet, and the desire of the chase allayed. "How if this poor pebble be the touchstone, after all?" said he; and he got down from his horse, and emptied forth his wallet by the side of the way. Now, in the light of each other, all the touchstones lost their hue and fire and withered like stars at morning; but in the light of the pebble their beauty remained, only the pebble was the most bright. And the elder son smote upon his brow. "How if this be the truth?" he cried, "that all are a little true?" And he took the pebble, and turned its light upon the heavens, and they deepened above him like the pit; and he turned it on the hills, and the hills were cold and rugged, but life ran in their sides so that his own life bounded; and he turned it on the dust, and he beheld the dust with joy and terror; and he turned it on himself, and kneeled down and prayed.

"Now thanks be to God," said the elder son, "I have found the touchstone; and now I may turn my reins, and ride home to the King and to the maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge."

Now when he came to the dun, he saw children playing by the gate where the King had met him in the old days; and this stayed his pleasure, for he thought in his heart, "It is here my children should be playing." And when he came into the hall, there was his brother

on the high seat and the maid beside him; and at that his anger rose, for he thought in his heart, "It is I that should be sitting there, and the maid beside me."

"Who are you?" said his brother. "And what make you in the dun?"

"I am your elder brother," he replied. "And I am come to marry the maid, for I have brought the touchstone of truth."

Then the younger brother laughed aloud. "Why," said he, "I found the touchstone years ago, and married the maid, and there are our children playing at the gate."

Now at this the elder brother grew as gray as the dawn. "I pray you have dealt justly," said he, "for I perceive my life is lost."

"Justly?" quoth the younger brother. "It becomes you ill, that are a restless man and a runagate, to doubt my justice or the King my father's that are sedentary folk and known in the land."

"Nay," said the elder brother, "you have all else, have patience also; and suffer me to say the world is full of touchstones, and it appears not easily which is true."

"I have no shame of mine," said the younger brother. "There it is, and look in it."

So the elder brother looked in the mirror, and he was sore amazed; for he was an old man, and his hair was white upon his head; and he sat down in the hall and wept aloud.

"Now," said the younger brother, "see what a fool's part you have played, that ran over all the world to seek what was lying in our father's treasury, and came

back an old carle for the dogs to bark at, and without chick or child. And I that was dutiful and wise sit here crowned with virtues and pleasures, and happy in the light of my hearth."

"Methinks you have a cruel tongue," said the elder brother; and he pulled out the clear pebble and turned its light on his brother; and behold the man was lying, his soul was shrunk into the smallness of a pea, and his heart was a bag of little fears like scorpions, and love was dead in his bosom. And at that the elder brother cried out aloud, and turned the light of the pebble on the maid, and lo! she was but a mask of a woman, and withinsides she was quite dead, and she smiled as a clock ticks and knew not wherefore.

"Oh, well," said the elder brother, "I perceive there is both good and bad. So fare ye all as well as ye may in the dun; but I will go forth into the world with my pebble in my pocket."

XIX

THE POOR THING

THERE was a man in the islands who fished for his bare bellyful, and took his life in his hands to go forth upon the sea between four planks. But though he had much ado, he was merry of heart; and the gulls heard him laugh when the spray met him. And though he had little lore, he was sound of spirit; and when the fish came to his hook in the midwaters, he blessed God without weighing. He was bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly of countenance, and he had no wife.

It fell in the time of the fishing, that the man awoke in his house about the midst of the afternoon. The fire burned in the midst, and the smoke went up and the sun came down by the chimney. And the man was aware of the likeness of one that warmed his hands at the red peats.

"I greet you," said the man, "in the name of God."

"I greet you," said he that warmed his hands, "but not in the name of God, for I am none of His; nor in the name of Hell, for I am not of Hell. For I am but a bloodless thing, less than wind and lighter than a sound, and the wind goes through me like a net, and I am broken by a sound and shaken by the cold."

"Be plain with me," said the man, "and tell me your name and of your nature."

"My name," quoth the other, "is not yet named, and my nature not yet sure. For I am part of a man; and I was a part of your fathers, and went out to fish and fight with them in the ancient days. But now is my turn not yet come; and I wait until you have a wife, and then shall I be in your son, and a brave part of him, rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going."

"This is a marvellous thing to hear," said the man; "and if you are indeed to be my son, I fear it will go ill with you; for I am bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly in face, and I shall never get me a wife if I live to the age of eagles."

"All this have I come to remedy, my Father," said the Poor Thing; "for we must go this night to the little isle of sheep, where our fathers lie in the dead-cairn, and to-morrow to the Earl's Hall, and there shall you find a wife by my providing."

So the man rose and put forth his boat at the time of the sunsetting; and the Poor Thing sat in the prow, and the spray blew through his bones like snow, and the wind whistled in his teeth, and the boat dipped not with the weight of him.

"I am fearful to see you, my son," said the man. "For methinks you are no thing of God."

"It is only the wind that whistles in my teeth," said the Poor Thing, "and there is no life in me to keep it out."

So they came to the little isle of sheep, where the surf burst all about it in the midst of the sea, and it was all green with bracken, and all wet with dew, and

the moon enlightened it. They ran the boat into a cove, and set foot to land; and the man came heavily behind among the rocks in the deepness of the bracken, but the Poor Thing went before him like a smoke in the light of the moon. So they came to the dead-cairn, and they laid their ears to the stones; and the dead complained withinsides like a swarm of bees: "Time was that marrow was in our bones, and strength in our sinews; and the thoughts of our head were clothed upon with acts and the words of men. But now are we broken in sunder, and the bonds of our bones are loosed, and our thoughts lie in the dust."

"Then said the Poor Thing: "Charge them that they give you the virtue they withheld."

And the man said: "Bones of my fathers, greeting! for I am sprung of your loins. And now behold I break open the piled stones of your cairn, and I let in the noon between your ribs. Count it well done, for it was to be; and give me what I come seeking in the name of blood and in the name of God."

And the spirits of the dead stirred in the cairn like ants; and they spoke: "You have broken the roof of our cairn and let in the noon between our ribs; and you have the strength of the still-living. But what virtue have we? what power? or what jewel here in the dust with us, that any living man should covet or receive it? for we are less than nothing. But we tell you one thing, speaking with many voices like bees, that the way is plain before all like the grooves of launching: So forth into life and fear not, for so did we all in the ancient ages." And their voices passed away like an eddy in a river.

"Now," said the Poor Thing, "they have told you a lesson, but make them give you a gift. Stoop your hand among the bones without drawback, and you shall find their treasure."

So the man stooped his hand, and the dead laid hold upon it many and faint like ants; but he shook them off, and behold, what he brought up in his hand was the shoe of a horse, and it was rusty.

"It is a thing of no price," quoth the man, "for it is rusty."

"We shall see that," said the Poor Thing; "for in my thought it is a good thing to do what our fathers did, and to keep what they kept without question. And in my thought one thing is as good as another in this world; and a shoe of a horse will do."

Now they got into their boat with the horseshoe, and when the dawn was come they were aware of the smoke of the Earl's town and the bells of the Kirk that beat. So they set foot to shore; and the man went up to the market among the fishers over against the palace and the Kirk; and he was bitter poor and bitter ugly, and he had never a fish to sell, but only a shoe of a horse in his creel, and it rusty.

"Now," said the Poor Thing, "do so and so, and you shall find a wife and I a mother."

It befell that the Earl's daughter came forth to go into the Kirk upon her prayers, and when she saw the poor man stand in the market with only the shoe of a horse, and it rusty, it came in her mind it should be a thing of price.

"What is that?" quoth she.

"It is a shoe of a horse," said the man.

"And what is the use of it?" quoth the Earl's daughter.

"It is for no use," said the man.

"I may not believe that," said she; "else why should you carry it?"

"I do so," said he, "because it was so my fathers did in the ancient ages; and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

Now the Earl's daughter could not find it in her mind to believe him. "Come," quoth she, "sell me this, for I am sure it is a thing of price."

"Nay," said the man, "the thing is not for sale."

"What!" cried the Earl's daughter. "Then what make you here in the town's market, with the thing in your creel and nought beside?"

"I sit here," says the man, "to get me a wife."

"There is no sense in any of these answers," thought the Earl's daughter; "and I could find it in my heart to weep."

By came the Earl upon that; and she called him and told him all. And when he had heard, he was of his daughter's mind that this should be a thing of virtue; and charged the man to set a price upon the thing or else be hanged upon the gallows, and that was near at hand so that the man could see it.

"The way of life is straight like the grooves of launching," quoth the man. "And if I am to be hanged let me be hanged."

"Why!" cried the Earl, "will you set your neck against a shoe of a horse, and it rusty?"

"In my thought," said the man, "one thing is as good as another in this world; and a shoe of a horse will do."

"This can never be," thought the Earl, and he stood and looked upon the man, and bit his beard.

And the man looked up at him and smiled. "It was so my fathers did in the ancient ages," quoth he to the Earl, "and I have neither a better reason nor a worse."

"There is no sense in any of this," thought the Earl, "and I must be growing old." So he had his daughter on one side, and says he: "Many suitors have you denied, my child. But here is a very strange matter that a man should cling so to a shoe of a horse, and it rusty; and that he should offer it like a thing on sale, and yet not sell it; and that he should sit there seeking a wife. If I come not to the bottom of this thing, I shall have no more pleasure in bread; and I can see no way, but either I should hang or you should marry him."

"By my troth, but he is bitter ugly," said the Earl's daughter. "How if the gallows be so near at hand?"

"It was not so," said the Earl, "that my fathers did in the ancient ages. I am like the man, and can give you neither a better reason nor a worse. But do you, prithee, speak with him again."

So the Earl's daughter spoke to the man. "If you were not so bitter ugly," quoth she, "my father the Earl would have us marry."

"Bitter ugly am I," said the man, "and you as fair as May. Bitter ugly I am, and what of that? It was so my fathers . . ."

"In the name of God," said the Earl's daughter, "let you fathers be!"

"If I had done that," said the man, "you had never been chaffering with me here in the market, nor your father the Earl watching with the end of his eye."

"But come," quoth the Earl's daughter, "this is a very strange thing, that you would have me wed for a shoe of a horse, and it rusty."

"In my thought," quoth the man, "one thing is as good . . ."

"O, spare me that," said the Earl's daughter, "and tell me why I should marry."

"Listen and look," said the man.

Now the wind blew through the Poor Thing like an infant crying, so that her heart was melted; and her eyes were unsealed, and she was aware of the thing as it were a babe unmothered, and she took it to her arms, and it melted in her arms like the air.

"Come," said the man, "behold a vision of our children, the busy hearth, and the white heads. And let that suffice, for it is all God offers."

"I have no delight in it," said she, but with that she sighed.

"The ways of life are straight like the grooves of launching," said the man, and he took her by the hand.

"And what shall we do with the horseshoe?" quoth she.

"I will give it to your father," said the man; "and he can make a Kirk and a mill of it for me."

It came to pass in time that the Poor Thing was born, but memory of these matters slept within him, and he knew not that which he had done. But he was a part of the eldest son; rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.

XX

THE SONG OF THE MORROW

THE King of Duntrine had a daughter when he was old, and she was the fairest King's daughter between two seas; her hair was like spun gold and her eyes like pools in a river; and the King gave her a castle upon the sea beach, with a terrace, and a court of the hewn stone, and four towers at the four corners. Here she dwelt and grew up, and had no care for the morrow and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

It befell that she walked one day by the beach of the sea, when it was autumn, and the wind blew from the place of rains; and upon the one hand of her the sea beat, and upon the other the dead leaves ran. This was the loneliest beach between two seas, and strange things had been done there in the ancient ages. Now the King's daughter was aware of a crone that sat upon the beach. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the rags blew about her face in the blowing of the wind.

"Now," said the King's daughter, and she named a holy name, "this is the most unhappy old crone between two seas."

"Daughter of a King," said the crone, "you dwell in a stone house, and your hair is like the gold, but

what is your profit? Life is not long, nor lives strong; and you live after the way of simple men, and have no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour."

"Thought for the morrow, that I have," said the King's daughter; "but power upon the hour, that have I not." And she mused with herself.

Then the crone smote her lean hands one within the other, and laughed like a seagull. "Home," cried she, "O daughter of a King, home to your stone house, for the longing is come upon you now, nor can you live any more after the manner of simple men. Home, and toil and suffer, till the gift come that will make you bare, and till the man come that will bring you care."

The King's daughter made no more ado, but she turned about and went home to her house in silence. And when she was come into her chamber she called for her nurse.

"Nurse," said the King's daughter, "thought is come upon me for the morrow, so that I can live no more after the manner of simple men. Tell me what I must do that I may have power upon the hour."

Then the nurse moaned like a snow wind. "Alas!" said she, "that this thing should be; but the thought is gone into your marrow, nor is there any cure against the thought. Be it so, then, even as you will; though power is less than weakness, power shall you have; and though the thought is colder than winter, yet shall you think it to an end."

So the King's daughter sat in her vaulted chamber in the masoned house, and she thought upon the thought. Nine years she sat; and the sea beat upon the terrace, and the gulls cried about the turrets, and wind crooned

in the chimneys of the house. Nine years she came not abroad, nor tasted the clean air, neither saw God's sky. Nine years she sat and looked neither to the right nor to the left, nor heard speech of anyone, but thought upon the thought of the morrow. And her nurse fed her in silence, and she took of the food with her left hand and ate it without grace.

Now when the nine years were out, it fell dusk in the autumn, and there came a sound in the wind like a sound of piping. At that the nurse lifted up her finger in the vaulted house.

"I hear a sound in the wind," said she, "that is like the sound of piping."

"It is but a little sound," said the King's daughter, "but yet it is sound enough for me."

So they went down in the dusk to the doors of the house, and along the beach of the sea. And the waves beat upon the one hand, and upon the other the dead leaves ran; and the clouds raced in the sky, and the gulls flew widdershins. And when they came to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages, lo, there was the crone, and she was dancing widdershins.

"What makes you dance widdershins, old crone?" said the King's daughter, "here upon the bleak beach between the waves and the dead leaves?"

"I hear a sound in the wind that is like a sound of piping," quoth she. "And it is for that that I dance widdershins. For the gift comes that will make you bare, and the man comes that must bring you care. But for me the morrow is come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power."

"How comes it, crone," said the King's daughter, "that you waver like a rag, and pale like a dead leaf before my eyes?"

"Because the morrow has come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power," said the crone, and she fell on the beach, and lo! she was but stalks of the sea tangle, and dust of the sea sand, and the sand lice hopped upon the place of her.

"This is the strangest thing that befell between two seas," said the King's daughter of Duntrine.

But the nurse broke out and moaned like an autumn gale. "I am weary of the wind," quoth she, and she bewailed her day.

The King's daughter was aware of a man upon the beach, he went hooded so that none might perceive his face; and a pipe was underneath his arm. Th sound of his pipe was like singing wasps and like the wind that sings in windlestraw; and it took hold upon men's ears like the crying of gulls.

"Are you the comer?" quoth the King's daughter of Duntrine.

"I am the comer," said he, "and these are the pipes that a man may hear, and I have power upon the hour, and this is the song of the morrow." And he piped the song of the morrow, and it was as long as years, and the nurse wept out aloud at the hearing of it.

"This is true," said the King's daughter, "that you pipe the song of the morrow; but that ye have power upon the hour, how may I know that? Show me a marvel here upon the beach between the waves and the dead leaves."

And the man said, "Upon whom?"

"Here is my nurse," quoth the King's daughter. "She is weary of the wind. Show me a good marvel upon her."

And lo the nurse fell upon the beach as it were two handfuls of dead leaves, and the wind whirled them widdershins, and the sand lice hopped between.

"It is true," said the King's daughter of Duntrine; "you are the comer, and you have power upon the hour. Come with me to my stone house."

So they went by the sea margin, and the man piped the song of the morrow, and the leaves followed behind them as they went. Then they sat down together; and the sea beat on the terrace, and the gulls cried about the towers, and the wind crooned in the chimneys of the house. Nine years they sat, and every year when it fell autumn, the man said, "This is the hour, and I have power in it," and the daughter of the King said, "Nay, but pipe me the song of the morrow." And he piped it, and it was long like years.

Now when the nine years were gone, the King's daughter of Duntrine got her to her feet, like one that remembers; and she looked about her in the masoned house; and all her servants were gone; only the man that piped sat upon the terrace with the hand upon his face, and as he piped the leaves ran about the terrace and the sea beat along the wall. Then she cried to him with a great voice, "This is the hour, and let me see the power of it." And with that the wind blew off the hand from the man's face, and lo, there was no man there, only the clothes and the hand and the pipes tumbled one upon another in a corner of the terrace, and the dead leaves ran over them.

And the King's daughter of Duntrine got her to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages, and there she sat her down. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the veil blew about her face in the blowing of the wind. And when she lifted up her eyes, there was the daughter of a King come walking on the beach. Her hair was like the spun gold, and her eyes like pools in a river, and she had no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

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